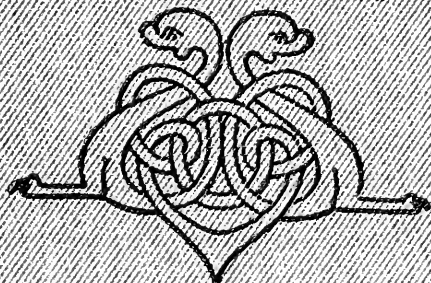


# FATHER JOHN KENYON

A PATRIOT PRIEST OF FORTY-EIGHT



By L. FOGARTY, M.A.



do

Cumann Círeann  
Boston  
U.S.A

ó

U hí fógarraiz

(Presented to  
— The Círe Society  
by  
a. Fogarty)









Father John Kenyon  
Parish Priest of Templeberry, Co. Tipperary

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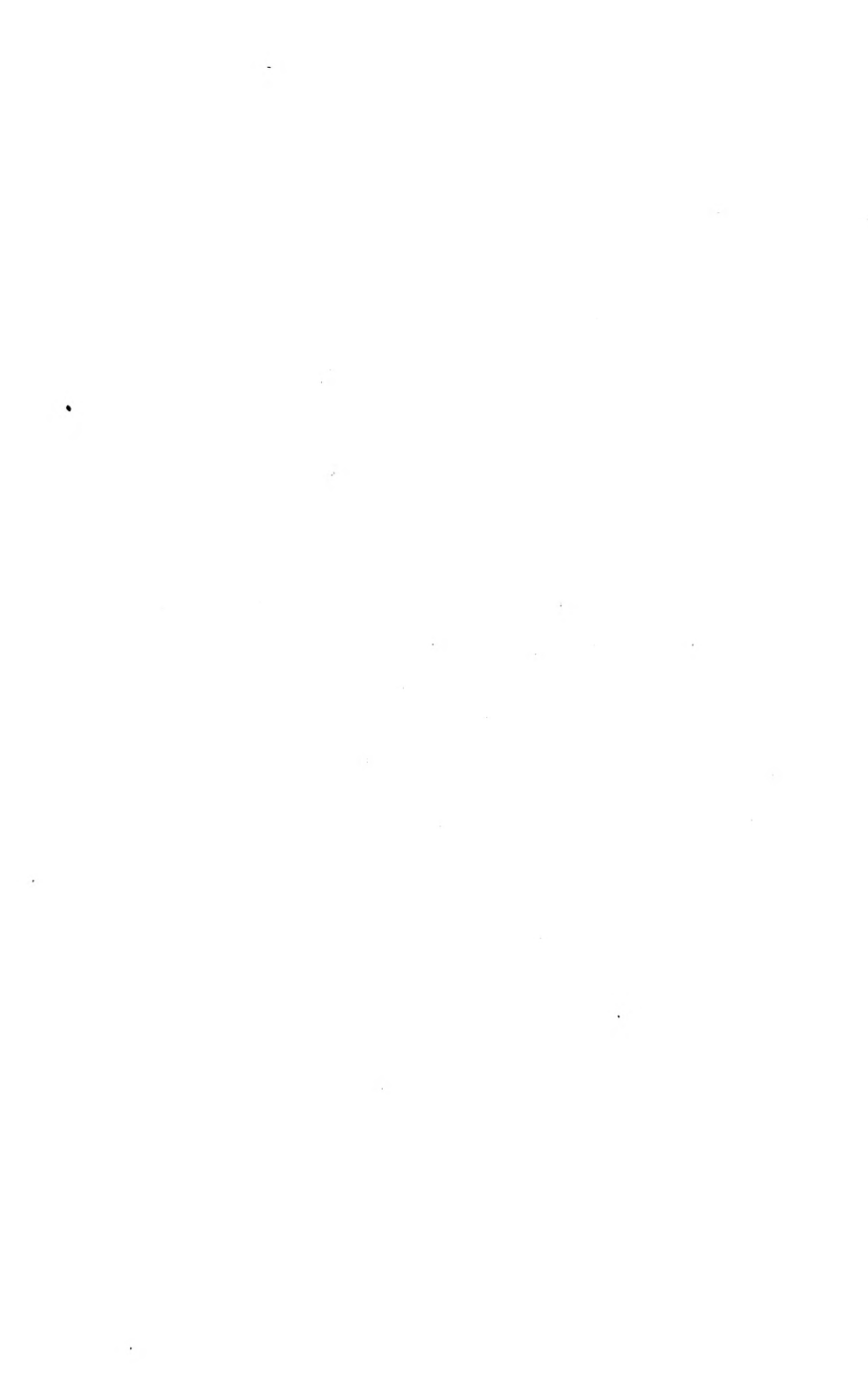
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Maṛ cuimniúḡaṇ ceana ir maṛ  
cluiḡe caointe aṛ na Ṣaeṇealaib  
oíṛe aṭá imearc na naoim aṣ  
ḡuṇe cun Ůé réan ir raoinne  
do caraṇ aṛ Éirinn.



# INTRODUCTION

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Old friends of Father Kenyon and their descendants will no doubt welcome a collection of his writings; from the general reading public their merit ensures an equally sincere welcome. Mitchel's chosen friend, a thinker, a leader of men distinguished even in Young Ireland circles, where brilliant talents were the rule rather than the exception, Father Kenyon needs no introduction to this generation of his countrymen, to whom the memory of the Dead proves a perpetual inspiration.

The nucleus of his political teaching is contained in the pamphlet on "Physical and Moral Force." Though some ambiguity seems to attach to the terms therein compared, no ambiguous conclusions can be drawn from the essay itself. Father Kenyon's expression of his views on this question was influenced by the Conciliation cant which so constantly assailed the ears of Irishmen during the years immediately preceding '48. On him lay the task of uprooting, by strong and vigorous criticism, the O'Connellite heresy—of re-asserting in clear and forcible words the Nation's faith. For this purpose he treated "physical force" and "moral force" as contrary terms. To Fintan Lalor "moral insurrection" implied the **defensive** (as opposed to aggressive) use of physical force. Clearly distinct from this is the

## VI.

view expressed by Duffy in '46: "The abstract theory, introduced in a clause of the resolutions" (i.e., O'Connell's "Moral Force Resolutions") "that force is never legitimate but in resistance, we will not stop to argue. We do not hold it, or, indeed, understand it."

Mr. Arthur Griffith defines the term "moral force" as "passive resistance to tyranny."\* The "ethical steam engine" contemned by Father Kenyon was a metaphorical and indefinable something by which "a man may have his eye knocked out, his legs cut off, or any other conceivable surgical operation performed on his body without the shedding of one drop of human blood."

To those who have, since the beginning of this century, witnessed the almost miraculous resurrection of the Nation's intellectual virility as the result of a few years' propaganda, it is difficult to understand why the teachings of Young Ireland were not met by a wider and more immediate response. O'Connell had led the people to Catholic Emancipation. They regarded him as a Liberator, and implicitly followed him. Once he ceased to countenance the "Nation" it was inevitable that the great majority would follow his lead. It was not O'Connell himself, but the wretched crowd of self-seekers who were around him, who caused the difference between himself and Young Ireland.

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\* Preface to "James Fintan Lalor: Patriot and Political Essayist," 1918.



## VII.

This collection of Father Kenyon's writings does not include those of a religious nature. Of his sermons, a large number are extant in manuscript.

An interesting article on the priest's life-work, published in the New York "Emerald," which reached me too late for inclusion in this book, will be inserted in a later edition. The present work has been greatly facilitated by the kindness of those who have aided me in the quest for information; amongst them I acknowledge indebtedness to Rev. J. Gleeson, Rev. Wm. Hickey, Miss Gilmartin, Messrs. James Ryan, R. P. Gill, F. J. Bigger, M.R.I.A., and to the son of a distinguished '48 man residing in Dublin.

L. FOGARTY.

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## CHAPTER I.

### OVERTHROW OF THE CONCILIATION PARTY AND

## Errata

- Page 3 For "mentality" read "sentiment"  
,, 14 For "House" read "House of Commons"  
,, 116 For "political" read "national"  
,, 119 Tenth line from top of page "gentlemen" (no italics)  
,, 178 Omit "I am, sir, your very humble servant etc."

modern movement in no way; it rather proves to a consistent phase in the growth of nationality. It proves, too, the conformity of the ideal of nationhood to-day and in the days of our grandfathers. The will to freedom was as active a force in past generations as it is to-day—as it will be until freedom becomes a normal state of things in our island.

The Young Ireland movement, as inaugurated by Davis and Duffy in 1842, was essentially an educational one. And a soul like that of Thomas Davis could not fail to be re-incarnated in a succeeding

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## CHAPTER I.

### OVERTHROW OF THE CONCILIATION PARTY AND STATE OF POPULAR FEELING—THE IRISH CON- FEDERATION.

The renunciation of Conciliation Hall politics by the Irish people in 1848 and the overthrow of the Parliamentary Party in 1918 present an interesting historical analogy. Both changes were brought about by the thinkers among the people; both mean a giant step forward by the nation, intellectually and spiritually.

It has been adduced, by way of criticism of Sinn Féin, that its leaders had not "even one original point in their policy"—that they owed all their ideas to the creative brain of Young Ireland. This statement, even if wholly true, demeans the more modern movement in no way; it rather proves it a consistent phase in the growth of nationality. It proves, too, the conformity of the ideal of nationhood to-day and in the days of our grandfathers. The will to freedom was as active a force in past generations as it is to-day—as it will be until freedom becomes a normal state of things in our island.

The Young Ireland movement, as inaugurated by Davis and Duffy in 1842, was essentially an educational one. And a soul like that of Thomas Davis could not fail to be re-incarnated in a succeeding

age. He was not merely born to die: his was a vocation akin to that of the chosen few characterised as "the salt of the earth." To-day the pioneers of the Irish nation's progress follow this great pathfinder, whom Mitchel referred to as "the most dangerous foe English dominion in Ireland has had in our generation."

Davis and his school first taught the people the uselessness of so-called "constitutional methods" in their country's struggle. Enlightened, they then saw themselves a nation pitted not against a tyrant, not against a despotic monarchy, but against another nation. They became alive to the necessity for self-protection, wariness, resistance. Tired of eloquence, promises, bargain-driving, the manhood of the nation longed to "try a fall with the enemy"; worn out, bled white by the vampire of starvation, they longed to cross weapons with the forces by which this vampire was fostered—"to cross the path of the British car of conquest though it crush them to atoms." When '48—the year of Revolutions—came the heart of the debilitated nation leaped with passionate expectancy, and even over a land bestrewn by charred corpses something like a white light of enthusiasm and hope was seen to glow. But the revolutionary outburst which dealt death to many European tyrants was not then destined to bring about the overthrow of Ireland's despoiler.

Catholic Emancipation gained for O'Connell the whole-hearted support of the Irish clergy. Almost to a man they encouraged and joined the Repeal Association. But in Ireland priests and people are

singularly united; and the priest is one in instinct, feeling, mentality, with the peasant. Hence they could not remain unmoved by the new impulse to which Young Ireland stirred the masses of the people. The grip by which the Loyal Repeal Association held them grew lax at the time when popular faith in the Liberator was shaken. It fell away finally when the spell of the great man's personality vanished—when his power deserted him in the hour of his people's direst need.

The question raised by some modern newspaper correspondents as to whether priests ought to participate in politics caused no conjecture at the time of the Repeal and Confederate movements. "Patriotism is human philanthropy" declared one of the *Nation* writers. And to witness tacitly the sufferings of their people the clergy should have been utterly dehumanised. Besides, the Catholic population had been marked out as an object of special persecution. "This party," wrote a distinguished Bishop\* a few years before the passing of the Emancipation Bill, "is kept in a state of constant excitement; they are goaded by the Orangemen, they are insulted by the Press, they are taunted by the education societies, the distributors of Bibles, and itinerant saints; they are stripped naked and almost starved by the squirarchy and Church; the Legislature does not attend to them; the Government do not protect them; the Judges,

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\* The Right Reverend Dr. Doyle, Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, whose "*Letters on the State of Ireland*," published in 1825, signed by the initials "J.K.L.," were remarkable for their vigorous style and fearless tone.

who would not give a stone to them for bread, are generally inaccessible to them; they are reduced to such a state that thousands of them look to death for repose, as the exhausted traveller looks to the shadow of a great rock in a land fainting from heat. . . . Should it be suffered to continue, should this party or this people, whichever it may be called, remain neglected by the Legislature; should their grievances be left unredressed—should their poor be left to perish—should their children be left a prey to Evangelicals and Methodists—should their religion continue to be insulted—should the agent, and the tithe-proctor, and the churchwarden, like the toads and locusts, come still in succession to devour the entire fruit of their industry—should their blood, when wantonly spilled, go unrevenged, we need no Pastorini to foretell the result. We have only to refer to our own history, or open the volume of human nature, to ascertain it. A Police Bill, a Tithe-Composition Bill, and an Insurrection Bill, and fifty thousand bayonets may repress disturbances, but who can contemplate a brave and generous people so abused? Who can dwell in a country so accursed? What man can appear before his God who has looked patiently at so much wrong, or who has not contributed by every legal means to relieve his fellow-creatures from sufferings so intense?"

Then, as now, the Catholic community meant the whole bulk of the people. In addition there were only, roughly speaking, two minorities: the Orange Party and the Government Party itself. When the Legislature then directed



its efforts towards the oppression and even *annihilation* of what constituted the entire population, thinking men, lay and clerical, were forced to conclude that a sure benefit would result from the abolition of such a Legislature. After 1829 a few timid pastors and equally timid units amongst their flock, content with the half-loaf (given with certain disfranchising reservations), preached acquiescence, patience, conciliation. The "carpet-patriots" extolled the new methods—the wordy and eloquent methods—by which eventually the native Parliament would be restored. The pledge-bound "Constitutionalists" spoke of winning Repeal of a completely *unconstitutional* Union, and qualified everything with the words "loyal" and legal."

But the vindictive policy of the Government became more and more aggressive. The clearance system, as recommended by the Devon Commission of Absentee Landlords, was carried out ruthlessly; the Consolidation of Farms, Cheap Ejectments, Labour Rate Act, Coercion Act, Emigration Committee, all facilitated the plan of Sir Robert Peel; the famine-slaughter of *two millions* of the "surplus" population of rural Ireland was speedily accomplished. Then indeed the more daring priests throughout the country cast aside with contempt the weak submissive policy of Conciliation Hall—renounced the heresy that "no political amelioration was worth one drop of human blood." The Irish Confederation, working for complete independence, won them at once. To stem the deadly work of a hostile Government nothing could be effective but total severance of all connection with that

Government. To do this, and to do it swiftly, the ardent spirits in the Confederation would employ all and every means. For this purpose all and every means were legal.

Some there were who deliberated; a few brought forward questions of organisation, of foreign alliance, of winning over the landlord class. *They* felt not the crying urgency of the situation.

Mitchel and Devin Reilly declared for immediate action; with them heart and soul were John Martin, John Fisher Murray, James Fintan Lalor, and Father John Kenyon.

## CHAPTER II.

### CHARACTER AND EARLY LIFE.

John Kenyon was a native of Limerick City. He was born near the Treaty Stone a little over a century after a King's honour was forsworn, and the famous "Articles of Limerick" drawn up.

Patrick Kenyon—the priest's father—was the owner of marble works and of prosperous grocery stores. He married Mary McMahon, a handsome and graceful woman possessing the uncommon gifts of sympathy and humour. She was well known and long-remembered for her charity to the poor: in "the bad times" she made a practice of sending her children around to distribute soup and other necessities to those in want, knowing that those who refrained from coming forth to beg were often those in direst need. The family consisted of three sons and three daughters. Of the former, John and Patrick were ordained to the priesthood, and Louis, having graduated as an engineer, went to America. Patrick, ordained for the foreign mission, went to Australia, where he died at an advanced age. The three girls entered religion, and were professed nuns during their parents' lifetime. 'As a boy John was distinguished in the family circle by strength of will and a decided tendency to bend others rather than to be bent. His wilfulness was often a source

of paternal displeasure; but when "John's ways" caused his father to frown they only drew hearty laughter from his mother.

His early schooling over, he went from his native city to Maynooth College. Here aptitude for all branches of learning, but in particular for classical literature, logic, and philosophy, won him many distinctions; whilst his lively sense of humour and genial spirit earned for him popularity and affection amongst his fellow-ecclesiastics.

After his ordination in 1836 he was appointed, first to a curacy in the parishes of Kilroctish and Doora, and a few months later to a curacy in Ennis, Co. Clare. He was removed to Silvermines three years after. It is believed that he incurred the displeasure of his superiors in Ennis by denouncing in too strong terms a well-known family who had become perverts. This was deemed unbecoming in a young curate, from whom was expected mute acceptance of the established order of things and a certain amount of self-effacement.

Before his appointment to Templeberry on 11th December, 1842, he held curacies in Kilmore (Silvermines) and Ballinaclough, Co. Tipperary. About this time many incidents are related and personal impressions recorded of the young priest's appearance and character. He was much above the average height, of spare, wiry frame, active and athletic; in countenance pale and ascetic, he wore something of a student's preoccupied expression. Physically he was strong, and carried what might be termed an atmosphere of strength with him—a man to lead men, to venture boldly, he commanded by his very

presence. Another priest\* who met him at a social gathering about this time records the charm and fascination Father Kenyon's words exercised on his hearers. He calls his style of conversation "God-like." That most rare gift, the power to please by the mere sound of voice, was his; and, supplemented by the wealth accumulated by a vigorous intellect, it gained for him increasing esteem and love as his years advanced.

A close reader of history, political economy, and current events, he lived anything but an esoteric life. He was a keen sportsman, and enjoyed all the delight of open-air pursuits. The survivors of his generation recall the familiar figure of the priest as he crossed the hills with dog and gun. He loved animals, and, besides horses and dogs, he kept a deer—a beautiful tame thing devoted to him, and responsive to his least word or touch. Beyond the immediate sphere of his duties, he was known as the author of poems and letters which appeared in the *Nation*. He first met John Mitchel when the latter was on the editorial staff of that paper. Prior to July, 1846, he appeared on a few occasions in Conciliation Hall. His earliest work of distinction was a memorial drawn up to refute the charge of atheism levelled against the Young Irelanders. This he prepared and presented to Dr. Crolly at the Presbytery, Marlborough St., with another illustrious priest, Father C. P. Meehan.

. . . . .

A rigid honesty in thought and act—a scrupu-

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\* Rev. Father Buckley, of Cork County, author of some works on religious subjects.

lous consistency in principle and conduct—mark him apart as one of those few to whom insincerity would be impossible. Frank and open speech was so much a part of his nature that he paused not to weigh whether his utterances might give umbrage (as in Ennis, at the very outset of his career) or compel admiration and applause. “If a thousand worthy and honourable men,” he declared, “opposed their prejudices to a purpose which I deemed solemn and salutary, I could incur their united contempt and glory in it for the furtherance of such a purpose.”

That the existing parties, either as political bodies or individuals, would gain no allegiance from a man thus sternly moulded might be surmised. If he respected any of them it was the Conservative Party: he regarded them as “open foes”—the Liberals as “false friends”:—“I respect an open and manly opponent, but false pretences and false pretenders I utterly scorn, whether on the bench, the tribune, or the chair editorial.”

A party of Irishmen who would ally themselves to a British party in Parliament, who would compromise and shuffle and permit themselves to be ordered and re-ordered like a row of chessmen in the deft hands of the players, who would sway with the winds that blew Whigs in and out of office, earned his scathing contempt. At the time when the entire country was enthusing about O’Connell, and the general body of the clergy spoke only praise of the Liberator and his policy, a stern protest—an emphatic depreciation—came from the pen of Father Kenyon. Others wrote at variance with per-

sonal conviction: notably the leading *Nation* writers in 1847, but this to him was morally impossible. As a writer then, and later as a public leader, he was conscientious and true to himself in every hazard. When called upon to make a sacrifice of one of two great and cherished principles, he gave further proof of the strength of this "celestial fire of conscience" that burnt within him. And the choice was a difficult one: the alternative such as few men have to face.

Understanding this much of his character, it will be readily conceded that Father Kenyon was not qualified by nature to excel in politics—whether we take that word to mean "deceit," as did the Greeks, or give it a modern definition. The true politician is past-master in the art of blinding friend and foe as to the goal he seeks whilst gaining to it by a gradual and circuitous route. Of this subtle art the '48 leaders knew but little. With perhaps the single exception of Charles Gavan Duffy, none of them were thoroughly versed in statecraft—least of all Father Kenyon, singularly tenacious of principle and conviction, and actuated always by a single indomitable purpose. With Mitchel patriotism was a passion, not "the craft of a politician." To Father Kenyon it was more than a passion; it was an inspiration—an influence almost divine. He refers to "holy patriotism." He taught the people what it meant, and in what the national work consisted. Before the era of revolution he stirred them to greater activity—besought them to cast off the stupor that had benumbed them. He was not impetuous or rash in word or act; but he meant

what he said when he told the people "to attain peace by legal means, *of course*," but "to *seek restlessly, unceasingly*." How many who heard him utter these words pondered on and understood their import?

"A man of action" in the true sense, he found it difficult to restrain the popular impulse which his inmost convictions applauded. Yet he knew full well that the rural population, over which he had such a wonderful sway, could not then initiate the revolution.

In the early days of 1848 he addressed the following remarks to an open-air gathering at Borrisokane, and his hearers must have been impressed by the many points he refrained from dwelling on, rather than those on which he touched with a so tragic levity:

"You understand that we are now under the operation of what is called the 'Gagging Bill,' and thus if any man in Ireland shall dare to express his sentiments upon that condition, he is liable to be sent to break stones for seven years on Norfolk Island. We are told we cannot say anything calculated to disturb the public peace (hear, hear). Do you call the present state of things in Ireland peace? (No, no, and cheers). I don't. I consider it a most deadly war. I say it is a misnomer of the Government to call the revolting and soul-harrowing state of things now existing peace. But it is all according to law (laughter and cheers), and if we say anything to disturb that law we are seditious, or we are liable to be called traitors (hear, hear, and laughter). But, my friends, let us all say before God that it is an elegant law, that we love it, that we will submit implicitly to it. (No, no, and never, never). You don't feel the great gratitude you should towards the English Government for permitting you to fatten on a pound of porridge in the day



(laughter). Would you rather have a tenure in your holdings and eat wheaten bread—would you, you savages? (laughter). There is a way of escaping that degradation and attaining this desired end of eating the produce of your lands. God Almighty clearly intended that the inhabitants of this rich and fertile land should live like men, and if we be true to ourselves it shall be the case again. I tell you, my friends, the Council of the Confederation is the only immediate means of effecting it. There is no hope for us in the members of Parliament. I say nothing against the law, mind—it is a beautiful law—for is it not the means by which thousands are killed, and tens of thousands made beggars of? Oh, revere the beautiful law! (laughter). The castigations the English Government are inflicting on you are merely paternal—they make you suffer for your own good (laughter). According to the Scriptures, they are chastening those whom they love. I don't know whether you will be implicit followers of my directions; but I may as well tell you that a good deal of what I have just said is a figure of speech called irony. We understand how this misery came upon us; we know it was by being deprived of our native Parliament, and we must strain all our energies to regain it."

## CHAPTER III.

### THE GENERAL ELECTION IN LIMERICK.

The General Election of 1847 occurred during the first week of August. In the month of May of the same year the Council of the Confederation had appointed a delegation to O'Connell's Association—hoping to effect a reconciliation for the purpose of fighting the representatives of the Imperial garrison. Members of the Confederation, such as John Mitchel, did violence to their personal feelings in consenting to act on this delegation. Conciliation Hall would, however, brook no thought of co-operation. John O'Connell vetoed a proposal to consult with the envoys of the Irish Confederation.

The public funeral of Dan O'Connell, held over until the election campaign had opened, revived the waning enthusiasm in favour of the Liberator's party. The election resulted in the return, by sweeping majorities, of men who were either satellites of the younger O'Connell or open supporters of the Government. The former, having secured the places for which they frankly strove in preference to Parliamentary fame, soon retired, leaving the Whigs minus their valuable support in the House.

The return of John O'Connell as member for Limerick City caused no surprise: it was anticipated from the outset. When Father Kenyon hurried

from the seclusion of his county parish to nominate Richard O'Gorman, of Dublin, the public were taken completely by surprise. O'Gorman, standing in the Confederate interest, gained 38 votes. O'Connell and John O'Brien won, respectively, 581 and 532 votes. Less far-seeing minds than those of Father Kenyon and his friends might have deemed this a decisive overthrow. With them it counted for something far removed from defeat—for what was morally a triumph. They realised "the pith and essence of the hope" which had led them into a contest so unequal. To those seeking for gold in the recesses of the earth, a few grains shining on the surface of the sand is a find sufficiently inspiring.

In Limerick in those days the education of the people had scarcely begun. The time was not ripe. But the beginning was made.

When the first Sinn Fein candidate was defeated in North Leitrim in 1907 Mr. Arthur Griffith claimed the eleven hundred votes won as a distinct victory for a policy at that time untaught to the people. Like Father Kenyon in Limerick, he opened up the furrows; and in 1918 the Sinn Fein candidate for North Leitrim was returned by a majority of 14,615. At the same election the political descendant of O'Gorman was returned *unopposed* for Limerick City.

In the letters given below Father Kenyon explains how the early struggles "warmed many a torpid heart with a fresh infusion of hope in the final triumph of freedom":—

"To the Editor of the *Limerick Reporter*.

"My dear Sir,—With a view to obviate a silly mistake into

which, I doubt not, the supporters of place-begging, corruption, and despotism will readily fall, respecting the probable issue of this day's election, I wish to publish according to my estimation I have secured already all the essential good which I aimed at effecting, or which I could have hoped to effect, by a contest in Limerick. This proud truth is at least upholden—Limerick shall not become any man's property (to sell for five pounds) without a determined struggle and resistance to the death. If the men of Limerick have not joined this present struggle in sufficient numbers to make it effective in fact, that is their concern. They may, perhaps, be held excused by some, in consideration of the suddenness of the emergency; by others they may be condemned for identically the same reason. But whatever estimate may be formed of their conduct, the honour of the brave old city is at least redeemed from the infamy of a mute submission to tyranny, and the foundation is laid and an omen auspicated of some future and perhaps a not distant victory.

“I am, dear Sir,

“Yours very truly,

“JOHN KENYON, R.C.C., Templeberry.”

“To the Editor of the *Limerick Reporter*.

“My dear Sir,—Since the moral force mob, with which the Courthouse was packed last evening, would not hear my reply to the charges laid against me by Messrs. O'Brien and Devitt, I expect that your finer sense of justice will repair their error. Mr. O'Brien complained of my opposition as vexatious, inasmuch as ‘it could have no object, or at least no issue except to delay his election.’ I scorn to repudiate his calumny respecting my ‘object.’ It is a cowardly calumny: for if he was prepared to sustain it, why skulk out of it, on the instant, into the alternative ‘at least no issue’; and if he was not prepared to maintain, why did he dare to express it? His assertion that my opposition ‘could have had no issue except to delay his election,’ I disprove by the fact. It has had another and widely different issue indeed. It has kindled in many a disbelieving mind a faith

in human honour and honesty, which the vile faction of Conciliation Hall had all but extinguished. It has warmed many a torpid heart with a fresh infusion of hope in the final triumph of freedom. It has taught, I trust, even the deluded mob a lesson, that may profit them even yet, of the respect which a true man of God's creation, an earnest man, who lives 'for more than living,' may always claim and will always assert, and must always extort from even the perversest generation. These high issues, I fancy, are of greater concernment to humanity than Mr. O'Brien's election two days sooner or two days later, or even the number of guineas which the delay may have cost him; and on these issues I am content to rest my justification of the opposition of which he so unhandsomely complained.

"Mr. Devitt—according to the laws of his nature—has gone deeper into the filth of slander. My purpose, as seen through his glasses, was to combine with Tories, Orangemen, and other such marauders, to the overthrow of all trade and the utter extirpation of emoluments. A creature like Mr. Devitt—a thing of shreds and patches—cannot, of course, be expected to comprehend in his stunted spirit the fulness of a manly purpose; his bat's eye, adapted only to doubtful speculations, blinks and blinds in the heavenlight of truth. I overlook him. No Orangeman, in or out of Limerick, can be more despicable than Mr. Devitt.

"These men, Sir, presume to excuse me on the general merits of my Order; and effect, by such an excuse, to protect me from the rabid passions of the populace. I reject their excuses with infinite contempt. If, indeed, it shall ever happen—as what may not happen to a poor frail mortal—that I discredit my Order by disreputable conduct—if I am ever convicted out of my own mouth or any other person's of a lie—if I am ever caught in a sophistication—if I ever prove cowardly, selfish, or corrupt—then I am willing that my countrymen should forget my prevarications in their respect for my Order—an Order, I am proud to say, containing sufficient of salt to counteract and to conquer all the gangrenes that can afflict it. But while I stand unapproached with any other heresy than a disbelief in Con-

ciliation Hall, with any immorality except the fearless avowal of my honest sentiments, I shall prefer to rely on my own individual character, and reserve the treasures of the Church in general for cases of more urgent need.

“The protection of these men I have refused, and shall for ever refuse, to accept. I charge them with fomenting the very passions from which they would affect to protect me. While the High Sheriff—a gentleman in the truest sense of the word, whose demeanour throughout this election I could not sufficiently admire, and shall never forget,—was absent for an hour on Thursday from the Court-house the Mayor of this city—a mere adventurer, a political tide-waiter,—forgetful or unconscious of all the requirements of decency, did encourage the vilest characters to vomit against me their vilest rancour; he invited, with his own chief magisterial voice, a common idiot, but withal a vicious, to sing ribald songs; permitted a blackguard, in the last stage of brutal intoxication, to defile the court with his abominations, and altogether proved his title and his fitness to be the friend and correspondent of John O’Connell. No; when I cannot live without the protection of these Mayors and Devitts, let me die; life will be then no longer worth preserving.

“I shall only repeat that in the issue of the election I have realised the pith and essence of the hope that inspired me to contest it. The thirty-seven men who came forward unsolicited to record their votes for honesty and liberality, in the person of O’Gorman, outweigh thousands such as voted against him in the estimation of any man cognisant of the circumstances. If O’Gorman headed the poll, I would account the triumph to differ merely and little in degree from that which is actually accomplished. And I entertain no doubt that, humble as I am, if I had been in Limerick on the day John O’Connell was first nominated, or if my secluded position in Temple-derry had not left me for four days afterwards ignorant of that dreadful event, or if I had been able to leave my parish even on the Saturday, when it was first made known to me, and had not been detained there until the Tuesday before the election, Lime-

rick had not been degraded, as I feel it to be now. But I arrived in Limerick not till nine o'clock on the evening of the election, after a tedious travelling, and can only console myself under the existing calamity by the proud reflection that even at the last hour I, at least, made an honourable effort to avert it. There were others, however to co-operate cheerfully, boldly, and effectively; and when Limerick is worthy to do them honour, they shall not lack my testimony, if living, to their worth.

“I am, my dear Sir,

“Faithfully yours,

“JOHN KENYON, R.C.C., Templeberry.”

The Young Irelanders had not cherished a hope of winning over the country at this election. But it had the result of directing their efforts more vigorously towards propagandist work. The abstention policy as now understood was not clearly enunciated by them at that time. Mitchel appears to have been the only declared abstentionist amongst them, and it is most likely that Father Kenyon shared his views, as set forth in the following letter:—

“The elections on the whole,” wrote Mitchel, “have been a very unsatisfactory business. . . . We are all in great measure out of Parliament. And I can't say that I am sorry. It will force us into the policy I have so often urged—to neglect Parliament and its proceedings, and work at home.”\*

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\* Letter to John Martin, August 8th, 1847.

## CHAPTER IV.

### NATION LETTERS.—PHYSICAL AND MORAL FORCE

At a meeting held in Kilrush (July, 1846), Smith O'Brien was the principal speaker. "With as much frankness as consideration for O'Connell would permit," he deplored the Whig Alliance and the decline of the independent spirit with which the Repeal movement had been conducted. The Peace Resolutions, though then a burning party question, he did not touch upon. O'Brien always avoided offensive criticism, and only opened fire on a political opponent as a last resource. But Mr. Charles O'Connell, speaking for Conciliation Hall, attacked the Young Ireland Party, accusing them of self-seeking, factionism, etc. This O'Brien could not let pass, though not then a member of the party attacked. Father Kenyon then addressed the meeting, and powerfully vindicated the Young Irelanders, and defended their views on the employment of Physical Force.

The letter on "Physical and Moral Force" was written to the Editor of the *Limerick Reporter*, and published in that paper. A month later it was reprinted in the *Nation*. In December of the same year it was published as one of the Confederation pamphlets with an introductory



note\* by "Publicola." A slight penny booklet containing only twelve pages, printed by W. H. Dyott, of 24 North King Street, it ranks amongst the best of the numerous pamphlets produced at that time. It is one of the most valuable pieces of Father Kenyon's writing that remain.

### PHYSICAL AND MORAL FORCE.

"If in a short time afterwards I should be accosted by the same person with complaints of public grievances, and should be consulted whether it were lawful to revolt or justifiable to join in an attempt to shake off the yoke by open resistance, I should certainly consider myself as having a case and question before me very different from the former. I should now define and discriminate. I should reply that if public expediency be the foundation it is also the measure of civil obedience; that the obligation of subjects and Sovereigns is reciprocal; that the duty of allegiance, whether it be founded in utility or compact, is

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\* "It is amongst the great bulk of the honest but misled people," wrote "Publicola," "that this letter is calculated to do good service. Bewildered by the very monstrosity of Mr. O'Connell's inconsistencies and contradictions, and having access only to the always corrupt and now be-whigged Repeal Press, they still imagine that eccentric old gentleman is in politics infallible. Little do they know that that man, whose real character is *Ancient Pistol*, has been eating leeks all his life. Jack Lawless made him eat two leeks; they were the first he swallowed, and he made a great many faces. The leeks in question are better known by the term 'wings,' and are to be found in Hansard's Report from p. 143 to p. 164, where he swore before a Committee of the House of Commons that 'the Catholic clergy were lowly-born and meanly brought up,' and that it would be desirable to 'attach them by a golden link to the Crown, 'to get from the Pope a veto for the same power on the nomination of Irish Catholic Bishops, and wind up by disfranchising the 40-shilling freeholders, who were, Mr. O'Connell swore, in the Catholic districts all perjurers. This evidence was given March 9th, 1825. He ate the words after at a public meeting, and wept largely on the occasion."

neither unlimited nor unconditional; that peace may be purchased too dearly; that patience becomes culpable pusillanimity when it serves only to encourage our rulers to increase the weight of our burden or to bind it the faster; that the submission which surrenders the liberty of a nation and entails slavery upon future generations is enjoyed by no law of rational morality; finally, I should instruct the inquirer to compare the peril and expense of his enterprise with the effect it was expected to produce, and to make choice of the alternative by which not his own present relief or profit, but the whole permanent interest of the State was likely to be best promoted."—Paley's *Moral Philosophy*, Book 6, ch. 4.

Queres 3. An Christianis licitum sit bellum?

R. Bellum esse Christianis licitum, modo certae conditiones adsint.—Bailly's *Tractate of the Decalogue*, ch. 5, prop. 4.

My Dear Sir—May I crave an opportunity of discharging, through your liberal columns, certain debts with which I have been lately loaded, and at the same time of expressing a few detached thoughts touching the present condition, prospects and duties of the Repeal Association of Ireland? A speech which I made at the Kilrush soiree last week has been severely handled by two reverend brethren of mine, Mr. Wynne in Conciliation Hall, and Mr. Power in a letter to the *Pilot*; and also by my worthy neighbour the editor of the *Tipperary Vindicator*. I stand charged by these rigid censors with heresy and schism, murder, arson, and eccentricity for the sentiment of that speech, yet I hope to make it appear without any extraordinary difficulty that those sentiments are not only extremely true and just, but also excessively moderate. For, while I characterised Mr. O'Connell's doctrine of moral force as false and visionary, I left it an open question for the sake of peace and in a spirit of toleration. Now, however, that I am in the mood of argument I deny that it is an open question. Mr. O'Connell's doctrine of moral force is based upon these two propositions:—First, that the employment of physical force for the attainment of any political right, even to the

shedding of a single drop of blood, is criminal; and, secondly, that all political rights are attainable by moral force alone. I now assert that, although these propositions may be overlooked in a speech as rhetorical flourishes, they are open, when logically stated, to anyone but a fanatic to entertain. To avoid, if possible, preliminary cavilling, I must observe that self-defence is excepted in the first proposition. The self-defence, however, must be fairly interpreted, for in the one sense I agree with Mr. Duffy, of the *Nation*, that all just wars must be called wars of self-defence. If, however, the exception of self-defence were understood in this comprehensive sense, then the proposition would amount to a mere quibble, and the whole doctrine of moral force to an egregious humbug.

Further, to avoid being mistaken, I will plead guilty at once to a shrewd suspicion that the said first proposition, qualified by the said exception, is in point of fact a very quibble—a hypocritical pretence—a palpable snare—a transparent humbug. I have no faith in the sincerity of Mr. Steele's horror. I do not believe that even Mr. O'Connell avoided in forty-three all allusions to physical force in the very sense and meaning which is now so mercilessly persecuted. Indeed, many sensible clergymen would fain persuade me that all the recent proceedings of Conciliation Hall should be pronounced a farce, and treated accordingly. I cannot, however, agree with them. I shall treat the question respectfully, as though it were a serious one. Only, to avoid being mistaken for a greenhorn, I have confessed my secret suspicion.

I assert, then, that the first proposition is false. No law, natural or revealed, makes bloodshedding a crime. Bloodshedding was practised by the Jews under the immediate direction of the Almighty. It is still practised, and lawfully, as all Catholic theologians teach in opposition to Quaker fancies, by all Christian Governments. The Fifth Commandment prohibits only unjust bloodshedding. The preservation of human blood in human veins is by no means of such vital importance. It is not the ultimate end of creation. Death by hunger, by dropsy, by consumption,

or by fever is just as bad as death by sword or bullet. Of the two I would rather be shot than starved to death any day of the year. And if nine hundred lives out of a thousand, which must otherwise perish within the twelve-month by wasting torture, could be saved by an appeal to the God of Battles, I am eccentric enough to think that humanity would be the gainer, though one hundred lives were sacrificed in the strife; and I believe that the God of Battles would accept the sacrifice. What a base doctrine is the first proposition? If all history were forgotten, and all guidances of authority withdrawn from the reason of man, the very instincts of his nature would revolt against it, and they would suffice to disprove it, for the diviner instincts are from God, and none are more divine than love of justice and of country.

But all history is not forgotten, and all authority is not withdrawn; and where, I ask, in all their volumes, may any traces of this new-fangled doctrine be discovered? Where is this superstitious reverence for blood inculcated? There were soldiers amongst the first believers in Christ, and their faith was none of the weakest. Christian soldiers crowded the legions of Rome immediately, and cohorts of martyrs received their crown without having repented, or being asked to repent, of their bloody profession. Was their physical force never employed except in self-defence? All the generations of the Crusaders, those glorious types of all that is most glorious in human nature, of its highest romance, and deepest devotion, of its chivalry, its self-sacrifice, its stern endurance, its tender piety, its passionate love—what of these Crusaders? What of all the Popes and their Bulls, the Bishops and their indulgences, the hermits and their exhortations, the kings and their treasures, the saints and their blessings, the monks and their prayers? Or does the exception of self-defence suffice to cover all the nations and generations that staked their hopes of earth and heaven on that mysterious strife? What an impious doctrine is this first proposition—one drop of blood!—one fiddlestick!

But why pursue this subject farther? Mr. Power, of

Kilrosenty, after an effusion of extremely nauseous astonishment at my wickedness (was not this Mr. Power involved some way or other in the monster prosecution) condescends to tell me that I labour under a mistake, and to add another qualification besides the self-defence to this opinion of Mr. O'Connell's. Mr. O'Connell, he says, does not mean that in times past every drop of bloodshed reckoned for a crime, but only that henceforth such shall be the case. If I commit an error of a year or two I hope Mr. Power will forgive me, for really I handled the *Pilot* to read his letter very reluctantly, and threw the filthy thing away as fast as I could, so that I do not remember whether the sin was to commence only from the time of his writing or had commenced last year or the year before. Here, at all events, is a considerable comfort, provided Mr. O'Connell approves the gloss put upon his opinion. Before Mr. O'Connell proclaimed himself the apostle of this new creed men might be saved though they fell, sword in hand, battling with the oppressors of their country. We need have no misgivings about the present happiness of the soldier-martyrs or the warrior saints of old. But now that Mr. O'Connell has assumed the office of an apostle, and declared that the moon is made of green cheese—I mistook, but no matter—now it is modestly expected that, like the simpleton in *Moliere*, we are to take it for granted that there are no hearts in our breasts, or, at least, they are no longer where they used to be. “*Nous avons changé tout cela.*” Go to bed, Mr. Power, and brighter dreams to you!

The first proposition, then, is false to reason and to manhood, injurious to the authority of the Catholic Church, and, if pushed to its legitimate consequences, subversive to all government. It derogates from the dignity of the living and the honour of the dead. It is a proposition open only on the side of fanaticism. If I ever subscribe to it I shall purchase, after my subscription, a white hat with a broad brim and abide with the Brethren for the remnant of my course.

The second proposition contained in and completing Mr. O'Connell's doctrine of moral force I believe to be false

and visionary. I could not, therefore, subscribe to it; yet it is a proposition, considered in itself, at which no one could take offence, for it is but an exaggeration of a lofty hope that has long haunted the hearts of enthusiastic philanthropists. If, indeed, it were sought to deduce from it the first proposition, then it might become offensive, or even hateful. At all events, it is not true. It is a vision. Many seers have seen it since the world began, and many dreamers dream it, and yet it is not a fact. The simple reason is that men are not pure spirits, and are obliged by a law of nature to learn their A B C before they can read. What is there in political rights more than in any other rights that they should be all attainable by moral force alone? If all political rights, why not all rights? And if all rights, why soldiers, marines, policemen, hangmen, catchpoles? Why locks and bars, and handcuffs? Why jails, and Bridewells, and hulks? If the world is so civilised by the mere promulgation of this new doctrine, how does it happen that in all the countries of the earth so many remnants of the exploded system, so many stiff and quaint appliances of physical force are retained at so much expense for the vindication of right and the correction of injustice? No—moral force may obtain some rights, personal as well as political, because some men are honest and intelligent; but it cannot obtain all rights, personal or political, because it is the fatal destiny of earth that many men will be always ignorant and vicious.

I do not, however, believe that in point of fact any political rights have been attained during this century for Ireland by moral force alone; that is to say, by such a moral force as Mr. O'Connell would now preach up. The moral force, for instance, which won Emancipation for us Catholics was not an emasculated moral force, such as this novel theory would give birth to. It was not a mere spiritual phantasm divested of flesh and blood and divorced from the substratum of physical energy, so essential to its vigour, its vitality, and its effect. The moral force which won Emancipation was the firmly expressed demand for justice of resolute men; it was the overflowing treasury

of the Catholic Association, every shilling of which stood for two stout arms and one brave heart. For although in '29 or before it he did not say: "Give us justice, or else"—yet, at least, the abstract possibility was recognised—nay, the imminent danger was feared, that those insulted and outraged Catholics, stung by the protracted delay or the final denial of justice, might extort at the sword or pike point more than their pens had dared to solicit. But let a nation now subscribe beforehand the suicidal doctrine that in no time, or place, or circumstances shall they ever draw a sword from its sheath or even a pin from its cushion—why, then, their opinions might rate at the ragman's price of the dirty paper on which they may have been foolishly inscribed.

They *might* rate, I say, at that price if any Government could be so silly as to believe that any nation could subscribe sincerely or would respect such a dastard creed. But, notwithstanding these preposterous attempts that are making of late to debauch a nation's character for honour and truth, moral force will still always operate, within the limits of its power, for good, because, in spite of false creeds and hypocritical subscriptions thereto, it is the privilege of the oppressed that they sometimes may (all divines save Quaker divines warrant the morality), and it is the law of nature that they often will (all historians warrant the fact) abandon the logic of the pen for the keener logic of the sabre.

Doubtless by this time poor Mr. Wynne is terribly horrified, and suspects me to be an ogre in disguise. But, indeed, my dear sir, you need not be afraid. I am as innocent as *Bottom*, the weaver, for all my rearing. Only for the sake of seeming preternaturally gentle, one should not belie the reason and the spirit wherewithal a beneficent God has inspired him. You must, however, promise me one thing, or I shall threaten, perhaps, to bite you in earnest. When you go into Conciliation Hall don't imagine that you have the sense of all the country in your pocketbook. Reflect that there are many, many clergymen besides the ten you know. Rude fellows, to be sure—many of them in Cork

County, and wild fellows in Tipperary, and vulgar enough in Limerick, yet who—but enough. You made, however, an argument which it may be only courtesy to notice, as it is, after all, better than the Kilrosenty sample. You say it is because of the present constitution of the world—namely, the spread of enlightenment, etc., that all sensible men have agreed, etc. Ah, my dear sir, if the rest of the world, or even Ireland, only partook of your city polish, or if the rest of your fellow-creatures, or even of your brother priests, could only creep into your sense, how easily physical force might be forced as physic upon the canine race, and how pleasantly we might simmer through life if even simmering did not trench too much upon muscular exertion! But these are exquisite dreams. I wish you, my dear Mr. Wynne, a thousand years to improve yourself.

In 1844, after O'Connell's imprisonment, I had a resolution submitted to the Committee of the Repeal Association for their advice as to whether it or some other similar one might be adopted with advantage to the country. They answered in the negative, and I submitted to their decision. Here is nothing, I should hope, that an honest man need hang his head for.

The *Tipperary Vindicator*, however, seems to think otherwise; and, after misquoting the resolution in an absolute form, asks me how I feel *now* upon the subject, and makes an insinuation about changes which has no merit that I can see but its latinity. The whole passage is a specimen of the silly small talk of such people. The fact is, I think now upon the subject as I did then—that is to say, very doubtfully as to whether the then Committee was equal to that great emergency. But, passing this mighty matter, I have to observe of the *Vindicator* that in my deliberate opinion the existence of such unprincipled papers as it and the *Pilot* is, in a political point of view, the greatest misfortune this wretched country has to suffer under. I speak of the *Pilot* from considerable observation, and of the *Vindicator* from thorough knowledge. I do not mean to compare the *Vindicator* to the *Pilot* either for vigour or



wickedness; but it is equally mean, more mercenary, and almost as vindictive. It is a right cunning paper, however. It will seldom commit itself to any opinion in a critical case till in the course of the week it is brought on the trail, and then it will bark away most gloriously and kick up a rare shindy. But if it happened to anticipate the cue, and fell into any mistake in consequence, it shall lick up its words in the turning of a fly-leaf. Really, I never feel so prone to despair either for the cause of Ireland or of man as when I reflect upon the baleful effects of such papers upon the sense and virtue of the people, and how seemingly impossible it is to eradicate the cancers from society. They are a race of most noxious vermin. Wounds, even healthy ones, fester once their filthy slaver is applied to them. A true-hearted, large-hearted patriot would mourn and blush at the hard necessity of disunion. He would yield everything but primary principles. And only when the last barriers of his forbearance were invaded, and the essentials of free thought and fair discussion put in jeopardy—only then, and then with grief too deep for words, would he leave his post. But these wretched, disgusting creatures, how they do crow and jabber in such a contingency. It is their triumph. They can't go wrong, they imagine. People say they do some good after all, hirelings as they are; nay, perhaps because they are hirelings and will promote their own interests. But what's the good? They raise worthless questions, fight aimless quarrels, get up meaningless cries, chatter from year's end to year's end about O'Connell as if the whispered approval of one honest man were not of more worth than all their base and grovelling adulation.

To the pernicious influence of such false and flattering counsellors—to the curse entailed upon him by their pestilent presence—their hypocritical support—their fawning idolatry, I attribute the false and sad position in which Mr. O'Connell has lately placed himself and the disastrous consequences that may result to the National cause from last Tuesday's proceedings. "A flattered prince," writes Ben Johnson, "becomes the prince of fools." Verily, the flattery has been laid on so thickly that the fools, I fear

me, will have him at last to themselves. And yet, what a pity that a mind so bright, and brave, and buoyant should yield, even before age had yet enfeebled it overmuch, to this equally insidious and perhaps more hurtful disease!

In further defence of myself or of my opinions at Kilrush, I shall not trespass on you. But only ask further permission to publish two or three detached opinions pertinent to this time:—

1. Although from reverence to Mr. O'Connell I would argue seriously with him, I have no hesitation in saying of Mr. J. O'Connell, and more energetically of Mr. Steele, that their inconsistencies in the matter of this controversy are so glaring, their affected horror at the late article of the *Nation* so hollow, and their bad faith, especially Mr. Steele's, throughout so manifest, that in my opinion a large section of the country must necessarily despise them for ever; and if, indeed, a larger or as large a section shall still submit to the juggling imposture, it will only prove that this Irish nation deserves its fate.

2. Mr. Steele seems to me, at present, a melancholy monument of the wretched condition to which even the highest order of minds may fall when they lose their virtue and independence.

3. The citizens of Limerick let slip a noble opportunity on Wednesday of serving their country.

4. Expectants of office and place have sprung in such countless numbers to sudden maturity throughout the land that in many places, as in Limerick, the public feeling of grief and indignation shall have no organ of utterance. Let it gnaw the people's hearts in secret. Shall patriotic place-hunters risk their discretion before the public?

5. John O'Connell, enlarging upon cases in which physical force and carnage would be all right (having a pass from his office) at the very time that he was provoking, by his contemptible intolerance, men every way his superiors, is such an illustration of Shakespeare's:

“That in the captain's but a cholerick word, which in the soldier were flat blasphemy,”

as one does not rightly know whether he should laugh or cry at.

6. Mr. Steele's exquisitely sensitive regard for the interests of peace, order, morality, and moral force—he having so often professed his readiness in public and private to take the field at a wink from O'Connell—he being still ready, as he said on Tuesday, to hand over his religious fellow-countrymen to the English Government, for a consideration, to wage all its murderous wars from Indus to the Pole, and slay at the rate of twelvepence per day all brave defenders of their native soil against all encroachments and pollutions of English lust and rapine—he glorying in the profession and practice of the duel—the most absurd and contemptible form which the physical force principle could possibly assume—a portentous caricature of justice, wherein an injured man, whom God and nature may have qualified to redress his wrong, if it was expedient, with a high hand, abjuring the privileges of his power and his right, places himself on the level, or below the level, of whatever puny and malignant wasp may have stung him—he, the known and notorious disbeliever in all religion—the scorner of so much Christian morality—this is a humbug so portentous that, while it lasts, adieu to hope! (Alas! that the beau ideal to my youthful fancy, or honour, chivalry and truth should present to my maturer mind such an altered complexion! How is the gold debased! How changed its hue most perfect!)

7. The Repeal Association, deprived of the valuable services of Smith O'Brien and his associates, would lose the confidence of the best half of Ireland. The other half might aid it for two or three years to drag a languishing existence into oblivion.

8. Smith O'Brien and his associates should by no means (which I deem a vital point) quit the Association, even though expelled, unless a full meeting of its members shall be duly summoned to deliberate and decide upon so grave a cause. It is highly absurd that such people as Steele, and Broderick, and others, our paid servants, or such as Wynne, because he chanced to live within the Circular Walk, or such as Reilly, because he may have profited by O'Connell, or that any others, because they might now

hope for some crumbs of Whiggery, should dare attempt to expel some of our worthiest, most loved, or most trusted members, or even force them, by rude interruptions, to leave our Conciliation Hall for an hour.

9. The Repeal Association of Ireland should be disburdened at once of such hollow, worthless, and rotten machinery as the Head Pacificator, the *Pilot*, and similar offensive stuff.

Yours, ever faithfully,

JOHN KENYON, R.C.C.,  
Templeberry.

Chapel House, July 30, 1846.

P.S.—A clerical friend advises me that I ought to disclaim here any intention of taking up arms next week or proceeding to cut the throats of all the abettors of English domination. I differ with him, yet I yield, and do hereby disclaim any silly purpose. My reason of difference is this—I believe that no disclaimers will prevent knaves and block-heads from misunderstanding and misrepresenting a man of sense and integrity. And I would not countenance the slavish notion that a man may not boldly deal with a clear question—Why did the Young Ireland Party introduce, or why do they keep alive, such a discussion at all? Here I assent to his opinion more readily. This is the answer:—They were and are compelled to it. They would have willingly avoided it. They frequently sought to have bye-gones left for bye-gones—they abjured over and over again all idea of using physical force, while the Association held together, or meaning to use it—but in vain. They were driven into a corner. The question was forced upon them—Do you think a nation may ever, in any circumstances other than plain self-defence, lawfully resort to arms to redress any imaginable wrong? What could these men do? Were they to belie truth, history, and human nature? Were they to brand themselves poltroons, hypocrites and slaves?

## CHAPTER V.

### WHAT ARE THE PREROGATIVES OF A LEADER?

The following letter was written some days after the historic Secession of the Young Irelanders. As an exposition of the O'Connell policy, it is remarkable both for its lucidity and force: Duffy declared it to be "almost as vigorous and as telling as one of Drapier's":—

To the Editor of the *Nation*.

"We who are worth as much as you, and have more power than you, we make you our king, on condition that you will respect our privilege—if not, not."

My Dear Sir—Between these memorable words, in which the Justicia Mayor of Arragon, on the part of his high-mettled compatriots, swore allegiance to King Philip the Second, and the words of Mr. Reilly on a late occasion, in Conciliation Hall, in which he boasted that he would not dissent from O'Connell, though he should be convinced O'Connell was wrong, there gapes a wide distinction. At the first blush a man of ordinary sense or spirit would feel disposed to award the palm of excellence to the Chief Justice's; but I find, since the publication of my late letter, that many otherwise worthy men are ready to swear by Mr. Reilly's O'Connell—this is the burden of their song—O'Connell is our leader—why, therefore, weaken his influence? Some of them, satisfied that O'Connell believes his own doctrine, and agreeing with me that it is a false doctrine, still condemn me for refuting it—because he is our leader. Others, holding a higher opinion of O'Connell's sense, pronounce the late proceedings at Conciliation Hall hollow and hypocritical, yet will not tolerate an

exposure of the hypocrisy—because it must damage the character and influence of the leader. Supposing, then, that scattered over Ireland are many other worthy persons agreeing in sentiment with those private friends of mine, it seems to me that I may discharge a duty to myself, and happily a service to my country, by correcting what I believe to be a most preposterous mistake respecting the just prerogatives of leadership.

Mr. Reilly's sentiment on this subject I consider slavish in its origin, vicious in its nature, and futile in its object. Who ever expressed such a sentiment respecting a man dead or distant? The Bishop of Rome is seldom remarkably juvenile. He is generally prepared for his high office by a life of seclusion and of study. He is selected for his superior merit from the wisest and most venerable college on earth. He is divinely ordained to teach, and supernaturally assisted. He does not form opinions in a hurry, nor propound them in a passion, nor enforce them for a purpose. Yet I dare say this identical Mr. Reilly might venture once and again, in a civil way of course, to differ with his Holiness. Who knows but he may go the whole length of the Gallican liberties and try titles with him even on a decision *ex cathedra*? Certainly Mr. Reilly would not hesitate to agree with the inspired writers in thinking that Solomon, the wisest of men, made a fool of himself in the end. Possibly he would pronounce Aristotle an ass in some respects, and Plato a mooncalf. He might have no scruple to pick holes in any system of philosophy hitherto invented, unless the system of Kant might be an exception, and as for legal dicta he would puff them away, or I mistake, like soap bubbles. I believe his low estimate of Smith O'Brien's authority, and perhaps of President Polk's, is recorded on the wild winds. But let Mr. O'Connell, of all men living, dead or yet unborn, say or do anything—say anything, no matter how false, do anything, no matter how fatal—Mr. Reilly cannot dissent, though convinced O'Connell is wrong. Ah! Mr. Reilly, you are a slave—a sordid slave! I only regret—oh, how deeply I regret it!—that you are not alone in your degradation.

This sentiment I consider, secondly, most vicious in its nature. What is it but a lie either expressed or tacit? And are justice and freedom to be won by lying? Do men gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles? It was, I presume, undisputed before now that evil might not be done in order that good may follow. Is this point of Catholic morality to yield, like the lawlessness of bloodshedding, to the influence of the new-fashioned ethics? No wonder that vile understrappers, like the *Pilot* and *Tipperary Vindicator*, trade on lies and corruption when the rulers of the system thus blazon their insincerity and wear their rottenness on their coat sleeves. No, Mr. Reilly, this will not do. Speak the truth out like a man—speak it always out, and fear not the result. The thing to be dreaded, Thomas Carlyle will instruct you,—and in this, at least, you may credit his teaching,—is not truth, but shams. Express your honest convictions just as God inspires them. Hide not the glorious light of reason—His surpassing gift—under the bushel of any pretence. Stifle not His voice in your heart from a silly apprehension of consequences. The issues of things are in God's hands, not in yours. Your sole business in this world is by truthfulness and integrity to deserve success; to grant it belongs exclusively to the grace of Providence.

The viciousness of this sentiment pervades and corrupts society to an alarming degree. From the machinery in Conciliation Hall to that of the meanest provincial journal, trickery predominates. Management is thought to be necessary for every purpose of life. Putting down is the order of the day. Most of our leaders, and best possible instructors, from Mr. John O'Connell downwards, seem to think that unless they are meddling in everything, everything will infallibly go wrong. Their plans and devices to keep the world agoing are most melancholy. Society is, in their eyes, but a big baby; and their labours are most ludicrous to keep it from spoiling its clothes. They tell it the ducks will eat up the puddle, and then it shall have a playday. They imagine the naked truth would bring on it some unheard of fit, and conceive a desperate antipathy against

anyone that should infringe their methodical management. Thus the little body who undertakes the management of Nenagh, and the parts adjacent—a precious specimen of the Kilrosent manufacture—

So sternly patriotic, oh! so rigorously good,

So solemn, sombre, sallow, sanctimonious, supercilious,

A poor sinner might be tempted to imagine (with poor Hood)

That he could be just as pious, though he were not half so bilious.

conceiving that the country was placed in jeopardy by my indiscreet publication—in fact, that it was reduced to such extremities as demanded his instant and sharp attention—learning some days last week that I was in town, and suspecting that I might have left my horse in Father O'Connor's stable, as I have done occasionally these seven years past,—went deliberately from his own lodgings, entered Mr. O'Connor's premises—he being at the time from home—and while I was engaged somewhere else with Mr. O'Connor's nephew, a clergyman of the town,—ejected the insidious brute, with force of arms, for the safety of the commonwealth. This fact achieved, the gentle Knight left by his pitchfork, and retired to pray. Can anything be conceived more foolish than such a system? As if the high purposes of Almighty Providence could be advanced by such paltry devices, or the destinies of nations affected by the like miserable machinations!

For my part, I never placed the slightest faith in that affectation of wisdom which would seem to control events. I believe, with the immortal bard, that—

“There's a divinity that shapes our ends,  
Rough hew them how we will.”

I have ever esteemed futurity as the most impenetrable of millstones, into which the wisest of men can see little farther than the foolishest. Policy and expediency are sciences I could never relish; and prudence I deem the most maligned, or the worst understood, of the virtues. With a love of truth and a love of justice—full, fervent, and un-



qualified—with a firm assurance that truth and justice can never injure man or nation, because God has decreed their final triumph, I am satisfied to take all the chances, and prepared, I hope, to encounter the accidents of life. And if men in general, and Mr. Reilly in particular, were less timid about saying what they thought true, and doing what they felt right, I am very far indeed from being satisfied from being one half hour the farther from a Repeal of the Union.

In the third place, I consider this sentiment most futile in its object. Unanimity, if so procured, would be merely a contradiction in terms. But it cannot be so procured. Mr. Reilly, indeed, is not singular in advancing it—again I deplore the disheartening fact—but, however widely this vile sentiment may have spread, the generality of mankind never can adopt it. The constitution of the human mind, with all its faculties, revolts from the imposition. Reason rejects the servile sophism. The will, endowed by its Creator with liberty, cannot abdicate its glorious privilege nor submit to the galling chain. Conscience spurns hypocrisy as a substitute for that truth for which it instinctively yearns. It may be that a hundred men—it may be that a thousand—warped by nature or by education or by interest, which is paramount to both, shall hold on to the Repeal Association by this rotten ligature; but if the Repeal Association is not otherwise made fast—if it is not placed on a firmer foundation, and secured with more enduring bonds, there needs no conjuror to divine its fate.

The recognition, then, of Mr. O'Connell as our leader, implies no such prerogatives on his part—no such turpitude on ours—as this base sentiment would insinuate. He is our leader, but he is such by our concurrence. He is not everything, and we nothing—he little less than angels, and we little more than dogs. He is our leader, but he is comprehended with us, his followers, in that universal law which makes every man liable to error, and every error liable to punishment. He is our chosen leader, but he is subject to our advice, liable to our control, dependent on our authority.

We do not renounce our human faculties when we elect him our guide. He is our leader, but his leadership is not the be all and end all of Ireland's life, and hope, and struggle—it is but a means to that end which we are vowed to accomplish. He is our leader, long tried and best merited; and, as such, entitled to our fullest confidence in dubious cases, to our cheerful submission in minor matters; but in graver causes and critical emergencies the voice of Ireland is not to be drowned.

Now, the feeling of universal Ireland, the excitement of all parties, and the attention of all neutrals, demonstrates that such an emergency has arisen. The result of our leader's policy during the last couple of years, however well intentioned, is in fact disastrous. Our national confederacy, such as it was, and it was imposing, is broken into fragments. By religious questions, from which he would not abstain, he has alienated the affections, embittered the feelings, cooled the zeal, and lost the support of a considerable number of our prelacy, priesthood, and people. Now, again, by a speculative question of ethics, still more unnecessary to be dwelt upon, or by the pretence of it, he is on the verge of cutting off for ever—if, alas! the wound be not already incurable—another and a more important section of our society, the fondest hope, the strongest sinew of the land—namely, the aristocratic class (in prospect), who might have been won by degrees to follow Smith O'Brien's example, but warned by his fate, who will never now expose themselves to similar maltreatment; and the generous youth of Ireland, those whose ears can yet tingle to impassioned words, whose hearts can yet throb to unselfish impulses, and who, with all the confidence and pride and elastic vigour of budding manhood, would spurn at all temporising shifts, and prudential doublings, as they trod right onward to the goal of freedom. Yet with these desperate losses and perils, staring at us most pitifully, we are told, indeed, to be silent, and though we think O'Connell wrong not to vent the naughty thought even in a whisper, because, still because, and only because he is our leader.

No; such a policy can but aggravate our burthen. Such

a craven and crooked policy can but lead us to embittered disappointment. The Association gangrenes must be cut out now or never. It will not do for Doctor Higgins to cry: "We have no physical force men in Ardagh"—a very vague, unmeaning, and factious cry, by the way. I could say, with exactly as much truth, we have no physical force men in Templeberry; Mr. Duffy could say, in the same sense, we have no physical force men in the *Nation* office, even when his corps mustered strongest. Neither will it do to decry the infidelity of the *Nation* newspaper. That imputation rests mainly on the *Nation's* support of the colleges bill, and form, therefore, a merely factious charge—Mr. John O'Connell's intolerant, impertinent, and inconsistent declamations to the contrary notwithstanding. It would not even answer any useful purpose that I can comprehend if the *Nation*, fooled by the *Tablet's* pretended gravity (the *Tablet* is an awful spider), should plead guilty to these episcopal charges, and solicit, with bated breath, merely a mitigation of damages. What fulsome nonsense is this!—what a canting travesty of Catholic truth and duty! Theologians used to teach, at least till within these few years (now that theology is amalgamated with politics, overlaid with new inventions, like the one drop of blood theory; and taught by such miscreants as the *Tipperary Vindicator* and *Pilot* at fivepence a lecture, it is scarcely safe to meddle with it) that even a decision of a General Council of the Church would not command unqualified acceptance if not formed conciliariter—that is to say, after the forms of examination and deliberation had been duly observed. But now, forsooth, every intemperate tirade of an individual Bishop—nine parts, mayhap, politico-factionous, and one part politico-religious—though unmarked by the faintest trace of discretion, even to the drawing of a most obvious distinction, and redolent to the very verge of nausea, of abject servility and indiscriminating violence, is to be welcomed with a blessing and obeyed without a murmur! No; the spirit of our Irish policy, religious and political, seems to me in sad want of amelioration. These courses can lead to nothing good. They involve in their tortuous tendencies

innumerable evils and perplexities. Relatively to our politics, they must end in enabling Lord John Russell to laugh at us all—as soon as he has leisure.

It is my opinion, therefore—and if its intrinsic weight or worth shall not make it live in the hearts of my countrymen—no one will rejoice more than myself that my insignificance could not protract its worthless existence, let it perish as soon as uttered, and drop still-born into oblivion! It is my opinion that the well-deserved and gladly-recognised leadership of our illustrious O'Connell does not deprive us of the right, nor absolve us from the duty of protecting our own interests whenever they shall seem to us imperilled; that the interests of Ireland are now imperilled by the splitting asunder into factions of our national confederacy; that this peril cannot be diminished, but must rather be increased, by the mere shutting of ten thousand eyes, the mere shouting of ten thousand lungs, or the mere thrusting of as many impetuous hands into an equal number of breeches' pockets for Repeal subscriptions; that the Repeal Association, as such, has nothing to do with questions of Catholic faith or discipline, nor with any abstract questions whatsoever of philosophy or morality; no, not excepting the very existence of a Providence; that a pledge to assist in procuring the Repeal of the legislative Union by legal means exclusively should be the sole test of membership in our national confederacy; that any person attempting henceforth to introduce or enforce another should be declared a public enemy; that all our proceedings during the last few years that have such a tendency should be declared and made void; that the parasites and toadies, whether of the rostrum or the Press, who have promoted such proceedings by their venal acclamations, and who would be again likely to promote similar proceedings by reason of their thorough and incorrigible depravity, should be instantly disbanded; that the accounts of the Association should be published periodically, and its conduct distinguished by tolerance, candour, honesty, and independence, henceforth and for ever. Amen.

If these opinions (my only privileges) are respected by O'Connell, he is my leader; if not, not.

I am, my dear sir, with the highest opinion of your integrity, and best wishes for your success, your very humble servant,

JOHN KENYON, R.C.C.

Chapel House, Temple-derry,

Aug. 12, 1846.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE PROCEEDINGS IN CONCILIATION HALL.

To the Editor of the *Nation*.

“Good men like the sea should still maintain  
Their noble taste in midst of all fresh humours  
That flow about them to corrupt their streams,  
Bearing no season, much less salt of goodness.”

My Dear Sir—Amidst the various unseasoned humours tending at present to corrupt the noble taste of truth and manhood in Irishmen, Mr. Spain's letter, of Birr, seems to me particularly insipid. Mr. O'Connell pronounces the writer one of the most estimable men living, and one of the most highly educated—a compliment which may possibly otherwise be merited, but which certainly is not warranted by the letter in question. This, with your kind permission, I intend to demonstrate for the benefit of those—and their name is still, unfortunately, legion—who are prone to mistake plausibility for reason, verbiage for argument, dignity for authority, and grave nonsense for solemn truth.

Considering that if a nation will be led by the nose they ought at least to know distinctly by whom the string is pulled, I shall now examine the authority of the document dated from Prospect, Birr, on the 22nd of last August, and signed “John Spain, P.P.” It accompanies the remittances of thirty-five priests of the decanates of Birr and Nenagh; and Mr. Spain intimates, at the outset, that it expresses their views and feelings. He asserts that it would be a positive injustice to his brethren (so eager does he suppose them to commit themselves) if he did not state what he states; and would even seem anxious to implicate in the same statement thirty-nine other priests of this diocese

whose Repeal subscriptions had been forwarded through Dean O'Shaughnessy, of Ennis.

Of these latter gentlemen I shall observe en parenthese, for I feel an interest in their honour, that although some of them may perhaps ratify Mr. Spain's opinions (some people nowadays will swallow or suffer anything), many of them, I know, will not. At all events, their contributions had been deposited with the Dean before the late break-up at Conciliation Hall, and can be therefore no index to the present state of feeling. I have even heard, and believe, that upon hearing the disastrous news some of them sought absolutely to withdraw their money; but, as it was posted on the Saturday or Sunday after the occurrence, their letters arrived too late.

Of the thirty-five gentlemen more intimately concerned I have heard some, and those very far from being the least respectable, not only expressing opinions opposite to those which Mr. Spain imputes, but declaring that they sent these very subscriptions under a distinct protest that they should not be supposed thereby to censure the opinions or policy of Smith O'Brien and his associates. If, under these circumstances, therefore, there be no public reclamation against Mr. Spain, it will only prove more fully, if fuller proof were needed, how lightly opinion is valued, how easily it is hushed, how slavishly it is suppressed, how despotically it is overborne in this wretched land—which seems to verify the prophetic satire, to match the indignant description, or to merit the bitter curse of Swift:—

“Ordained by fate to be the land of slaves.”

However, to do Mr. Spain justice, he vacillates considerably on this point before the end of his letter, and thus, perhaps, obviates the necessity of any reclamation. The views, he says, of so humble an individual can be of little value. But suddenly, as if apprehensive lest his case may suffer by such modest forbearance—as if confident that the season of mealy mouths is past, he wheels about again and jumps into the other extreme of presumption, cleau over the heads of his five-and-thirty brethren, venturing to identify the opinions of the whole order to which he belongs

with his own. The consequence is that a conscientious reader like myself remains, when all is said, a good deal puzzled to determine what degree of authority, or indeed whether any authority at all, attaches to the lucubration. So much for the authority of the letter signed "John Spain, P.P."

Entering upon the matter of the document, I regret to find it equally perplexed and unsatisfactory. It will discredit, I fear me, the character of that high education which Mr. O'Connell has with equal disinterestedness and discretion volunteered to extol. In the first place, Mr. O'Connell's peaceful policy receives unqualified approval. Now, it strikes me that it would have been no more than common prudence in Mr. Spain to define this policy before he stamped it thus with his unqualified approval. Perhaps he may have mistaken, like many others, Mr. O'Connell's policy. Perhaps this policy is not even yet perfectly developed. On last Monday Mr. O'Connell is reported to have said—"I would rather shed the last drop of my blood than that one drop of blood of another should be shed." Is this rhetorical nonsense included in the policy which Mr. Spain has approved? Those sweeping commendations are, to use the mildest language, extremely injudicious.

In the next place, the principle on which Mr. O'Brien seceded is declared to be untrue in morals and unsound in politics. Here again Mr. Spain leaves us wisely in the dark. It may be doubted if he comprehends this principle a degree better than he understands Mr. O'Connell's policy. It is Mr. O'Brien's opinion that physical force may be in some circumstances lawfully used for the redress of national wrongs. Mr. Spain seems to confound that opinion with the principle on which Mr. O'Brien seceded. He overlooks a broad distinction. Mr. O'Brien seceded because his right as a British subject to hold that opinion was most tyrannically invaded. And Mr. O'Connell, now that the invasion has proved successful, admits that right himself. "I tell them, however," he is reported to have said last Monday, "for their comfort that they may very well assert it (the physical force opinion) in theory, for mere assertion is not punishable at law." Thus Mr. Spain misses his mark.



Confining our attention now to the abstract truth of Mr. O'Brien's opinion, how does Mr. Spain impugn it? Or does he impugn it at all? He seems, indeed, to imagine that because obedience to the powers that are set over us is a natural, moral and revealed duty, therefore Mr. O'Brien must be wrong. But once more it is Mr. Spain that errs. His sight is much duller than might be desirable. Only the wildest fanatics—Wickliffeites, Mormonites—deny civil obedience. Mr. Spain should learn the state of a question before he presumes to discuss it, much more before he dares to decide upon it—according to the good old rule impressed upon junior logicians. It is not the general law that is disputed, but the particular exceptions. The question is whether, although civil obedience is of general obligation, any case may arise in which it could be lawfully refused. If Mr. Spain remained till Doomsday proving the general obligation, it is plain that this question would be still unsolved. He would be only beating the empty air.

At last, however, Mr. Spain does blunder upon the real question, and quotes Locke in such a way as to upset the position which he had previously established. He may say, after some worthy compatriot, "the first blow I hit him I missed him." If, he says, we adopt the theory of Locke, we may arrive at the conclusion that physical force in certain circumstances is a justifiable means for the redress of political grievances. Why, that is exactly what Mr. O'Brien and his co-opinionists assert. What Mr. Spain adds about Locke may detract something from the worth of his opinion, or it may not. If Mr. Locke was a party man as well as a philosopher, he was a philosopher at least as well as a party man; and the recent occurrence of that great measure, as Mr. Spain calls the resolution, may be supposed to have given rather a subject for his pen than a bias to his judgment. At all events, if, all things considered, we adopt his theory and may arrive at the conclusion expressed by Mr. Spain—*probatum est*—the point settled.

And yet the point is not finally settled, after all:—

"The times (indeed) have been

That when the brains were out the man would die,

And there an end; but now they rise again  
With twenty mortal blunders in their crowns,  
And push us from our points."

In the very next sentence Mr. Spain, by a peculiar process of thought, reverses his Locke doctrine, and seeks to regain the position which he thought he had previously established, and which he was just after upsetting. He proceeds now by two propositions. The first is declared as follows:—"If all the people of any country wish for changes in their form of government they can, of course, effect them without physical force." A sage announcement, about as significant as if another wise-head should assert:—"If the sky fell we might, of course, catch larks without salt."

"Thus pompously he lets us know  
What all the world knew long ago."

After a long and attentive scrutiny of this (first) proposition, I have come to the conclusion that it is a veritable mare's nest. It belongs to a class which, notwithstanding their indubitable truthfulness and their venerable appearance, have lost ground in the estimation of this railroad age. When nurseries were yet in the land, and people had leisure to speculate on contingencies consequent upon the falling of the sky, or ifs and ans being pots and pans, it might have taken a place of honour, and receded, as the world went on, into a respectable antiquity. But it was born too late. It is not steam proof. So we must even pass over it to more important concerns.

The second proposition is enounced in these terms:—"But if a section of the people suffer from unjust laws it appears to be the will of God that they should suffer patiently rather than run the risk of causing greater evils to the community at large in attempting to redress those of which they complain by forcible means." Here is, indeed, the pith of Mr. Spain's letter. It is not an argument. It is a mere assumption. It is loosely worded, and thoroughly rotten. Supposing the section to embrace 999 out of every 1,000 in the community, and the contemplated risk to be (by mathematical consequence—sufficient grievances being

assumed) considerably less than one in ten thousand millions, does it in that case appear to be the will of God that they should suffer patiently fever, famine, dishonour, and perpetual death rather than run that dreadful risk by employing forcible means for their protection? Indeed, Mr. Spain, you ought to consider before you blaspheme so against the good and just God. It is certainly much easier to talk of such a monstrous doctrine appearing to be the will of God than to prove it to be so, or to persuade honest men of it.

No; the doctrine of civil obedience, if interpreted with strict rigour, would disarm all opposition by moral force as well as by physical. I remember, before the passing of the Reform Bill, when a writer in "Blackwood's Magazine," zealous for

"The right divine of kings to govern wrong,"

sought to crush the moral force agitation of that period by the weight of Scriptural authority; and if he erred more deeply than Mr. Spain it was only because he reasoned more consistently. If it be not interpreted, as it must not, with such rigour, then opposition may be lawful by physical force as well as by moral. God created muscle as well as mind, and planted in the arm the power to strike, as He enabled the brain to reason or the tongue to speak. What is called moral force agitation may foster more vice and entail more misery than an honourable battle; while virtues may be developed in warfare which might make even our bloodless morality blush.

The truth is, Kings and Governments, and in general all those people who have had the luck of being born with a silver spoon in their mouths, finding themselves well provided for, and feeling rather comfortable, have been in all ages very laudably anxious to engage the Almighty in defence of their actual possessions. As long as it was possible, or wherever it is possible, they would have stifled all aspiring, that is, rebellious thoughts in the hearts of less favoured mortals. To further this object they have sought, and seldom failed to find, divines of all religions, portly and pliant, whose fancies, duly disciplined and sufficiently stimu-

lated, have detected those appearances of God's will, though they have no foundation whatsoever either in reason or Scripture. I do not mean to rank Mr. Spain amongst such divines; but he has picked up his doctrines in their school, and only forgotten the few flimsy arguments by which they have contrived to support it.

While thus catering for the exercise of Mr. Spain's superfluous pity, which seems to have been rather troublesome to him of late, I hope my labours may not miss of an ulterior profit. If it shall appear to any person that, in the discharge of my critical function, I have treated a clergyman of his dignity lightly, peradventure irreverently, be this my apology; exhibitions like this of Mr. Spain's seem to me calculated to bring religion and its priesthood into unmitigated contempt amongst men of education, intelligence, common sense or common honesty. Better, therefore, in my judgment, to expose their emptiness even at the risk of wounding the self-esteem of the parties, or lessening their general estimation, than suffer such reproaches to stand against us through pusillanimous respect. If dignitaries of the Church who ought to know better will proclaim from their high posts such crude and vapid notions on a matter of public interest, let them abide the consequence. True religion cannot suffer if their metal is but fairly assayed, however much it might suffer if their dross obtained currency. If I err in the making, or in the measure, of my present award, it is, of course, at my own individual peril.

This matter concluded, I had half purposed to pay my respects to my worthy neighbour, the *Tipperary Vindicator*; but I find the correspondence rather lengthy, and the creature, besides, is beneath an honest man's contempt. Lies and capital letters are his only resource. His writing might suggest the picture of a country bumpkin staring, through his open mouth, on his arrival in town, at some incomprehensible package in a grocer's window. He seems to agree with the inimitable satirist, being too stupid to smoke the satire, that—

“When letters are in vulgar shapes  
'Tis ten to one their wit escapes;

But when in capitals expressed,  
The dullest reader smokes the jest."

Or his piebald page might typify the pranks of a Merry-Andrew bedaubed with brickdust and yellow ochre at some village exhibition. The vulgar gape at the motley mountebank, mistaking his tawdry for bullion, his dull grimaces for the height of humour, and his inflated bombast for the extreme of wit. I shall therefore merely notice two attempts of his to disparage my honour; one by charging me with a breach of confidence towards Mr. Keary, whom he persists in miscalling my parish priest. Mr. Keary—I mean the real Mr. Keary, not this man of paste and paper—never favoured me with his confidence, though I knew him pretty well; and I will do him the justice to say that he would be, I am sure, the last person living to charge me with anything bordering, however remotely, on such a crime. Even the false and foolish forgery of a priest that talks silliness in the *Vindicator* abstains from such a base calumny out of respect, I fancy, to the very name of Henry Keary, which he otherwise disgraces. But nothing in that line comes amiss to the *Vindicator*. The Lord help the vindicated is my concluding prayer!

The other is his frequently-repeated slander that I am influenced in these writings, not by a love of truth, justice or liberty, but by some mercenary motive, which he does not indeed explain, but which he would fain represent as all the more detestable by mysterious inuendos, Latin scraps, variegated letterpress, and notes of interrogation. Miserable wretch! He is so lost to all sense of honour himself that he cannot even conceive of another acting from upright principle. A disinterested movement, if he could have faith in such a chimera, he would deem proof positive of insanity. But that any being could sacrifice his actual interest, or even risk it, for the public good he might imagine possible, under great excitement, in some planet beyond the moon, but never an inch nearer to this our earthly habitation. Such an imputation, to be sure, is the only possible answer to an unanswerable argument, and has been accordingly haphazarded in all emergencies by

unscrupulous adversaries; but in my case it is particularly ludicrous. It is a strange abortion of calumny. It has not the colour of a pretext either in my habits or my fortune, both of which are tolerably well known hereabouts. A few books, in fact, are all my worldly possessions; for my horse, I suppose the *Nenagh Guardians* will admit, is not worth reckoning, and I doubt if the poorest of my relations will account my monkey a good legacy. Property, landed or founded, I never had, never hope to have, and, what may sound more startling in the *Vindicator's* sordid ears, I never desire to have. Church preferment has no engrossing charms for me. I doubt if it would make me happier than I am. At all events, so far from hoping to accelerate it by these steps, my misgivings, if I entertained the like, would incline the other way. The vein which Nature, ever bounteous though sometimes freakish, has allotted for my dower, is generally found as unproductive in the Church as in the State. Plutus, the old myth says, was brought up by Pax. Certainly I would not falsify my honest convictions for all the livings in a Bishop's gift. There has not been even a private friendship to vitiate my motive in this transaction. The only one of the party called Young Ireland that I ever spoke with was Mr. O'Gorman, and with him, as it happened, for little longer than while we were swimming amidst our western waters, where we had other rocks than political to break upon, if unguarded, and coursing billows to employ all the physical force we had to spare.

No, thou vile detractor! I know the arts of rising in the world, but I know only to scorn them. The policy of remaining neutral in a contest, with a nation's liberty at stake, until the weaker side knocks under, which policy, couched in those classic terms, I heard an honourable Town Councillor advocating in Limerick (not having the fear of glorious ghosts in his heart) at a meeting which I was instrumental in collecting on the day after the break-up at Conciliation Hall—and which the same chivalrous gentleman, I perceive, has been since following up—that policy I would spurn from me, though I were to be denounced for it over the earth. The baseness of saying one thing to-day and

the contrary to-morrow, as per order—of now painting the Kilrush proceedings white, and in a week or ten days painting them black or blue, according as the political druggist may furnish pigment or brush, or as the lust of filthy lucre may inspire—of such baseness, if a single instance, not to say twenty dozen of cases, could be charged upon me, I would bear to be hanged by the neck in an open market, and pelted with stale fish and rotten eggs as I hung. By such and similar arts let those rise in the world who will and can. I renounce them from my heart, and choose, for better or worse, and treasure, for weal or woe, the privilege of free, honest and independent thought, which, however limited in other respects its utility, and however humble its aspirings, may elevate me so high, at least in my own mind, which is mine own kingdom, that I shall be able to look down with as much contempt as religion may countenance, upon those sordid wretches who blush not to prank themselves with the wages of their infamy, and who can batten like swine upon foulest garbage.

My part, therefore, in these unhappy events has been taken from a clear conviction of a strong impulse of my own unbiassed judgment that truth, justice and freedom have been grossly outraged in the persons of Young Ireland, of the proprietor of the *Nation*, and of all the honest men who have espoused their just and sacred cause—that hypocrisy, false pretences, marked tyranny, and manifest corruption characterise the unprincipled hirelings in and out of Conciliation Hall who have commenced, and who still promote, for sinister ends these crying outrages—that it is the duty of all true patriots (and here I disapprove of the policy recommended by Mr. O'Brien on a recent occasion to Dr. Griffin, of Limerick) to denounce and resist these outrages, by all means and at all risks, because it must degrade us as a nation to tolerate them for an hour—that if the Irish people

(“ A servile race in folly nursed,  
Who truckle most when treated worst ”)

are not now stung into a sense of manly virtue, and if that

sense is not quickened by the courage of those few leading men who

“Fear not policy, that heretic  
Which works on leases of short-numbered hours,  
But all alone stand hugely politic—”

then all the toil, and thought, and treasure which have been devoted in latter years to the cause of national independence will have dissolved like a vision, nor left a wrack behind—in fine, that discussion is now a duty, for as much as a sterling minority is better than a corrupt multitude; unanimity would be our deadliest curse until a basis of honourable and efficient co-operation is again established upon principles of strict truth, sincere honesty, inviolable freedom, and just toleration.

I remain, my dear Sir,

Your very faithful servant,

JOHN KENYON, R.C.C.



## CHAPTER VII.

### LEADERSHIP OF O'CONNELL.

To the Editor of the *Nation*.

"I am sensible much is due to the man who has always preferred the public interests to his private advantages, as . . . has done. When a man has signalised himself—when he has suffered for that principle, he deserves universal respect. Yet men should act agreeably to the motive of that respect, and not ruin the liberty of their country to show their gratitude. And so, my lord, where a man has the least pretence to that character, I think 'tis best to pass over small offences, but never such as will entail danger and dishonour upon us and our posterity."—Swift: Letter to Chief Justice Whitshed.

My Dear Sir—I think the time has come—I date it from the publication of his address to the steadfast moral force Repealers of the City of Cork—to propose and answer the question, to propose it plainly and to answer it distinctly—Is O'Connell any longer capable of leading the Irish people to their advantage? If not, the sooner the nation prepares for the consequences of an interregnum the better. While it was possible to separate O'Connell's character from the bad faith and bad policy that reign, alas! and revel in Conciliation Hall, it would have been my joy to aid in preserving it immaculate. I would have held it apart from profanation and saved it, for the veneration of posterity, from the infamy which was lowering over the close of his career—the desperate infamy which an old man may not hope to outlive. To this end I protested early and earnestly against the dangerous courses which as yet he might have declined. But his unprincipled intimates, the myriads of his hungry dependents, and crowds, moreover, I freely grant, of his true and disinterested but inconsiderate friends, laughed at the protest of a country curate. In such a

laugh, without caring much for the merits, O'Connell was constitutionally disposed to join; for, apart from his political leanings, in all cases of controversy in which he was called or not called upon to interfere, I think he will have been more generally found on the side of wealth, or power, or title, or dignity. A Repeal warden against a clergyman, a simple clergyman against a bishop, had never a chance of mercy, and would have often been thankful for justice at his haughty tribunal. The merits of my protest were, however, at least specious; and many respectable individuals, and some more spirited communities, bore testimony to the truth, and their voices had an echo.

But in the meantime the vile arts of the interested had been plied with a vicious assiduity, and to a fatal purpose. Large bodies of Irishmen, in whose thoughts O'Connell had been long associated with the purest idea of patriotic devotion—who fondly dreamed that he was, by some special providence, exempted from human frailty, and who would never even open their minds to a consideration of the possible effects of age—not to speak of other less excusable influences—on his temperament, had warmly confessed their unabated confidence in his counsels. Certain bishops, associating the interests of the Catholic religion, under a great mistake, with O'Connell's leadership, felt it an easy duty to publish similar professions, for which they received by return of post their meet reward. And whenever the bishop of a diocese was so minded—it is a psychological phenomenon not unworthy of note—he was always sure to be supported by the unanimous opinion of the whole body of his clergy. Here, then, were materials for the fabrication of a convenient public opinion. Out of these—though the questions at issue were not even glanced at by the greater number of the professors, and were fairly treated by no one, at least on this border of the Atlantic (in a Boston newspaper I have seen some approximation to honest controversy on the subject)—out of these, hashed and hacked and hackled by our grovelling Press, a false standard of opinion was accordingly fabricated; error and despotism were set up as idols in the very temple of liberty and truth; and at their

shrines, amidst the orgies of the wretched imposters and their infatuated dupes, the lacerated hearts and hopes of the honest and true and brave were offered, week after week, in disgusting sacrifice. So that when at length the intelligent citizens of Cork sought, by a respectful remonstrance, to remedy this sad condition of affairs, to rouse Mr. O'Connell from his lethargy, and haply to reclaim him for his country, he was so far gone in delusion as to laugh in their faces, and to stamp with his own name, and to embroider with his own quibbles, the threadbare sophistry of his miserable adherents.

Oh! what a contrast between that mirth of O'Connell's, painful to hear, like the pointless laughter of an idiot over a parent's hearse, and a melting pathos which a consideration of the same dissensions wrung from the unsophisticated heart of Doctor Cane, of Kilkenny!

Feeling myself now committed, by a tissue of accidents, to the struggle of Young Ireland against unjust dominations of all kinds, whether foreign or domestic, and conceiving that Mr. O'Connell's letter, hostile alike to honourable peace and to the principles which I had publicly advocated, would justify, if it might not, indeed, provoke reprisals, I addressed the next following paragraphs to the editor of the *Cork Examiner*, which paragraphs he refused to publish. They were penned, to be sure, rather in haste, but the public may now judge at leisure whether the *Cork Examiner* was justified in suppressing them. I am aware, indeed, that he had his reasons. He is, it seems, a man of peace. But I may have as good reasons for thinking myself a man of peace as he. I know, on high authority, that persons may cry "Peace, peace, peace, when there is no peace." At all events, I cannot understand the term "liberal" applied to a newspaper editor who will exclude a communication that may not promote his own particular views, according to his own particular methods. It seems to me a sad misnomer:—

Chapel House, Templeberry, Oct. 26, 1846.

Sir—Having just received, through the kindness of some friends, a copy of the *Southern Reporter* of Saturday, con-

taining Mr. O'Connell's address to the moral force Repealers, or rather to the steadfast moral force Repealers of the City of Cork, I am induced to solicit a portion of your columns for a few remarks thereupon. What emotions this address will excite in your citizens' hearts I cannot, of course, divine; in mine it has excited, in an equal and supreme degree, surprise, and shame, and grief, and indignation. Mr. O'Connell commences facetiously, but it is bitter mirth. Since the time when Nero fiddled, at the burning of his capitol, there has not been heard perhaps a more deadly glee. When upon the occasion, as I remember, of Dr. Griffin's late letter, a silly Conservative member of the Limerick Corporation expressed the same sentiment with which Mr. O'Connell opens, I felt disposed to wonder how even a silly Conservative could be so heartless. Henceforth I am resolved to wonder at nothing. I have experienced my last emotion of surprise. I can salute a strolling centaur to-morrow as an old acquaintance, or play at chuckfarthing with a chimaera, by way of harmless recreation.

It is a reflection pregnant with unutterable sorrow that when Mr. O'Connell was penning his miserable quotation his better genius had not yet entirely abandoned him. But he remained deaf, as of late, to the inspiration, and the angel at length departed, leaving behind a mocking phantom of hope—a deluding demon—who whispered, and whose whisper was credited, that the quotation had nothing “unbecoming.” Ah! Mr. O'Connell, it was unbecoming out of all measure. It is enough to paralyse all the men of Ireland with grief. On even the stocks and stones of Ireland, and they were bad enough already, it must make a bad impression.

Mr. O'Connell, commenting on the first of the Cork resolutions, unfolds the motive of his paradoxical joy at this “mighty pretty quarrel”; and the motive is as hollow as the joy is paradoxical. “I consider,” he says, “that with some evil great good has arisen from the division, inasmuch as it has shown the ardour and sincerity of our adhesion to the strict rule of Christian morality, by the rejection of everything that could lead to violence or bloodshed.” If

violence and bloodshed were—what they are not—formal sins, everything that could lead to them should not be, therefore, rejected. As matters stand, the rejection of everything that could lead to violence or bloodshed is enjoined by no rule of Christian morality. Else could civil government be rejected in the bulk, because civil government not only can lead, but actually and daily does lead, to violence and bloodshed, as the records of Newgate abundantly attest. Mr. O'Connell shall never accredit this heresy, though he should utter it with his every breath.

Some scholiast hereupon will assuredly explain Mr. O'Connell to mean unjust violence or bloodshed. Well, then, his insinuation in this passage that the physical force doctrine could lead to such violence or bloodshed is false. This I have already proved at large, and my argument remains unanswered. I will now add, furthermore, that Mr. O'Connell's moral force doctrine could, in very truth, lead to this unjust violence and bloodshed, which is forbidden by the rule of Christian morality, only for one obstacle in its way: the obstacle is that the doctrine is absolutely incredible. But if bad men could once believe that the injured and oppressed are withheld by any valid law from redressing their injuries when they are able, and shaking off their oppressors by force of arms, in the last resort, then, indeed, might violence rage uncontrolled, and the blood of the innocent be profusely shed, because that of the guilty had been iniquitously spared. Mr. O'Connell's doctrine, however, will not operate evil through this channel. In practical matters men are not, on the average, fools. But in speculation, and for speculation, it will breed more mischief than the truth-tellers of this generation may suffice to counteract. Mr. O'Connell's regret, therefore, at the unhappy divisions, or at what he says "are called" unhappy divisions (as if he would dispute the epithet altogether), in so far as it is only partial—that is, in so far as it is displaced by a preposterous jollity—is a very hollow paradox, bestriding a pair of clumsy untruths. It were enough to choke one ten times over.

Mr. O'Connell's treatment of the second of the Cork

resolutions is rife with instruction ; but the instruction, alas ! will have been dearly purchased. The moral of the lesson is that when men have anything to do they should make short work of it. Out of respect, I have no doubt, for Mr. O'Connell's past services, the gentlemen of Cork abstained from any formal condemnation of his present errors. They confine themselves to generalities, and aim at effecting a re-union by zealously asserting that principle of moral force agitation which Mr. O'Connell himself once held, and taught, and worked, and triumphed with, and to which all sensible men, including even Smith O'Brien, still steadfastly adhere. Mr. O'Connell, deserted, I verily believe, at least since the commencement of this address, by his good genius, distorts this forbearance of theirs into an argument for himself—shuts his eyes vigorously upon the plain state of the question—attempts to checkmate the beautiful city by a most abrupt and sophistical movement—seizes the guerdon of victory by a sleight of hand, and cries “Bah !” at his astonished benefactors. Now, all this pother might have been prevented if the gentlemen of Cork had only told Mr. O'Connell in plain terms at the outset that it was not his present moral force doctrine—that stupid and servile paradox, as the *Morning Chronicle* most justly and happily termed it—which they meant to assert. Over politeness was the rock upon which they split. Their modest demand of “a re-consideration of the terms in which that doctrine is set forth” conveyed a hint that was far too delicate to pierce the seven-fold shield of flattery under which it is Mr. O'Connell's fate to totter. It only gave him a handle to work with—a foolish handle, indeed, and fitted for foolish work—but still a sufficient handle, considering what a light straw will captivate the fancy of one who labours under a strong delusion. Accordingly with this handle he belabours them gallantly. He will have none of their re-considerations—not he. Did they not admit the moral force doctrine? What more, then, would they have? It remains, that the whole constructure must fall to the ground, or be built over again on a better foundation, with the increased disadvantage that Mr. O'Connell's credit and character are

more desperately, if not, as I fear, altogether hopelessly involved: an issue that would shame the tribe of wait-a-whiles out of society during all future ages.

On the subject of the third resolution, Mr. O'Connell, speaking of Smith O'Brien, observes—"I heartily wish we had the benefit of his services, but I exceedingly regret the conviction that it is impossible to regain them." Since Mr. O'Brien's secession this is the usual structure of O'Connell's sentences in his regard. The "but" seems as if stereotyped, and suggests bad thoughts and nasty suspicions in spite of one. How a man's will can stand out so heartily against the conviction of his intellect, that its desires are impossibilities, is a study for metaphysicians who may be otherwise unemployed. I should rather cut the knot than have the trouble of unravelling it. Mr. O'Connell's conviction is all moonshine. At least, the reason on which he professes to have grounded it is as thin, deceptive, and evanescent. Here it is: "because in his letter to the Association, he (Mr. O'Brien) distinctly refuses to free England from the apprehension of the Irish sword." Was ever any reason more absurd than this? Is it in Mr. O'Brien's option to free England from this apprehension? Does he retain the Irish sword in perpetual custody? The sword, is it, which his great ancestor flashed of yore through the reeling ranks of Ireland's foemen? And if he did enjoy such an astonishing monopoly of power, and if, embodying in his single person all the wrongs which his countrymen have suffered, through English misrule, he did haunt the hearts of our oppressors with apprehension—if, like an avenging angel, he did disturb their slumbers, and would allow them no rest, nor ease, nor quiet until justice were consummated, and his native land redeemed from their blighting thrall, should this transcendant service exclude him from our Hall of Conciliation? Monstrous! Surely he were then worth more to Ireland than all the men that ever entered it. As for the reptiles that crawl there now and croak, I would, in no supposition, think of a comparison between him and them. But this is all idle. Mr. O'Brien could not, if he would, free England from the

apprehension of the Irish sword. He might, to be sure, brand the word poltroon in large letters upon a brass plate, and wear it on his shoulder like a policeman, or on his forehead, and glory in it, like some of our Conciliation folk; but England would be never the freer from apprehension by reason of his abasement. There is no peace for the wicked, saith the Lord. The trodden worm will sting; the gentle hare will bite in her fearful extremity, and injured men, reduced to like extremity, will redress their wrongs, as they can, in the face of all unnatural formularies and prescriptions. Mr. O'Connell's reason is, therefore, no reason. On the contrary: no wise Government—wise, I mean, as distinguished from good—should rather apprehend, and more, from the perfidy of perjured slaves, however lowly they may crouch, than from the faith of honourable men who will not shrink from asserting before Heaven their wrongs, their rights, and their resolves.

I shall note, in conclusion, what perhaps has not been publicly noted as yet—Mr. O'Connell's extreme arrogance in assuming himself to be, as a matter of course, in the right of this dispute; and all who differ with him in the wrong. Such an assumption, while confined to general policy, and used against a hostile Government, and made in speeches, might have passed well enough. It may be even still tolerated, as regards a particular opinion, when used by a third party. But when Mr. O'Connell himself throws it, as a proof of "fatuity and folly," in the teeth of gentlemen who, although less highly endowed in some respects, and in many respects, than he has been, may be yet quite as well qualified by nature, education and study to judge of a particular controversy, it sounds rank arrogance in my ears, and is another sadly superfluous instance of the corrupting influence which the use of despotic power, The word "moral," it is known, is of ambiguous import; and Mr. O'Connell is either a dupe or a party to the equivocation. In one sense it is opposed to "immoral"; in the other "physical." In the first sense of the word, Mr. O'Connell's conviction is partially sound, but irrelevant; in the second, it is equally irrelevant and entirely rotten.



aided by the flattery of a courtier crew, must ever exercise upon the most gifted minds even, and the most genial tempers.

I am, Sir,

Your very faithful servant,  
JOHN KENYON, R.C.C.

P.S.—In an article in the *Reporter* upon Mr. O'Connell's address this passage occurs:—"The questions involved in this controversy are exceedingly simple. They are these:—Firstly, is our object separation, or British connection, with a domestic Legislature? Secondly, can either one or the other be obtained by physical force? Thirdly, is moral force—that is, public opinion concentrated and united—capable of achieving our object peaceably and constitutionally? Not a single one of these questions happens to be involved in this controversy. In another part of the article this sentence occurs:—"Is our cause to be overthrown in order to glorify a mere abstraction, when a reality is acknowledged, as regards Ireland, to be absurd and preposterous?" Abstractions are not opposed to realities, as this random writer supposes; but are rather themselves essential realities, stripped of all varying and vanishing accidents. This trinity of abstraction is, nevertheless, to be glorified. If it be true that men or nations may assert their rights, in certain circumstances, by physical force, that truth will survive all the twaddle, and cant, and quibbles of this shameful period; and freemen, while time endures, and true men, till time shall be forgotten, will remember its base gain-sayers with a pitiful scorn.

In this letter to the *Examiner* I abstained from noticing Mr. O'Connell's two reasons for adhering unalterably to the full strength, form and pressure of the moral force doctrine because I purposed discussing them at length in a letter to your journal. Now, however, that your columns are burthened with the entire of my remarks, I shall restrict my proposed discussion to a few obvious comments. His first reason is thus expressed:—"My thorough conviction that political institutions cannot be safely, wisely, or securely ameliorated by any other than moral and peaceable means."

These truths may be unfolded in a variety of expressions, each and all opposed to this heterogeneous conviction. As, for instance: there is no essential connection between peace and morality; nor between immorality and war. No one is advocating the employment of physical means for the amelioration of our political institutions. Political institutions may be ameliorated by physical means. They actually have been by such means ameliorated. Safety is not always to be sought, nor danger to be shunned. Every lawful amelioration may and must be wise. An amelioration, though insecure, is better than its opposite. Secure ameliorations have been effected, even in this realm, Magna Charta to wit, by other than moral and peaceable means, etc., etc.

His second reason reads thus:—"That any concession now made to the Young Ireland Party (even if there were to be concessions at their side, which they have not been asked for) might easily be construed by a Dublin jury into an accession to a principle involving deep guilt." This is a lawyer's reason, with a murrain. It would be reputed a layman's dotage. It is for the Irish people to determine how far a man capable of being influenced in a matter so grave by a matter so trifling is capable any longer of leading them to their advantage. It is the lowest rule of human action that I have ever heard or read of. A Dublin jury is transfigured into a pure ideal of eternal justice—"bright effluence of bright essence increate." What they should pronounce deep guilt would be guilt indeed, of a quintessential quality. What they should construe into deep guilt must be at least infallibly bad. What they should construe into even an accession to deep guilt will be certainly criminal. What they might construe into an accession to a principle of deep guilt is yet to be dreaded more than a general conflagration. And what they might construe into an accession to a principle involving deep guilt, however remotely, is still, after all abatements, such a damnable concern that Mr. O'Connell, rather than smell it, will ruin and disgrace his country.

For Mr. O'Connell's past services I am as grateful as the *Cork Examiner*. I respected him according to my appre-

ciation of his deserts, which was not, I hope, illiberal, though it fell ever far short of the idolatry of his blind worshippers. But, guided by the advice of the great Irishman whose words I have chosen for a motto—the stern, undeviating, uncompromising, unpaid asserter of his country's independence and his own—I shall act according to the motive of that respect. I shall not ruin (*pro modulo*) the liberty of my country to show my gratitude. I shall not pass over an offence calculated in my judgment to entail danger and dishonour upon us and our posterity. I hereby, therefore, renounce O'Connell's leadership till he mends his ways. I will be none of his led captains henceforth. In some imaginary temple I shall deposit my leading strings, neatly folded up, till they are wooed and won by some knight, *sans peur et sans reproche*, some worthier type of Christian chivalry, having his loins girt about with truth, and wearing a breastplate of justice, and a shield of faith, and a charmed spear, tempered, like Ithuriel's, to dispel with its lightest touch phantasms, falsehoods, illusions, dreams, and all other forgeries of devilish art which, more than threatening fleets, or the dust of mercenary armies, can taint the spirits of nations and cloud their destinies. If such a knight shall not turn up within a reasonable period the aforesaid strings shall descend with me to my humble grave. I conclude abruptly with an apothegm of Schiller's, which I warrant to contain a sense more Catholic than its author contemplated, and to suggest a virtue, indispensable at all times, to men aspiring to be free; but at this period of fluctuation, disruption and transition, of more worth to Irishmen than the breath of their nostrils:—

“Wenn Haupt und Gleider sich trennen  
Da wird sich zeigen wo die Seele wohnte.” \*

And remain, my dear Sir,

Your very sincere admirer,

JOHN KENYON, R.C.C.

Chapel House, Templeberry, Nov. 2.

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\* “When the head and limbs burst asunder, then shall be clearly shown where the spirit dwells.”

## CHAPTER VIII.

### RAFFLED RECONCILIATION.

To the Editor of the *Nation*.

Wollen wir . . .

Unablassig streben

Uns vom Halben zu entwohnen

Und in Ganzen, Guten, Schonen

Resolut zu leben.

. —Goethe.

My Dear Sir,—The Old Ireland ballads in your last numbers, more especially Mr. O'Connell's own variations to the excellent tune of "law," reminded me forcibly of Morrison's pills, whose surprising virtues—not seeing them set forth in your paper—I had well-nigh forgotten. Being withheld, by a late resolution, from any further feeling of surprise, I read these ballads over with mere amazement. But as I proceeded the amazement deepened into fascination. If Old Irelandism had been veritably a one-and-sixpenny affair, I think I should have purchased it and tried the efficacy of a dose. Not that I am, wittingly, weak in the head; but rather, perhaps, headstrong on principle. It was a physical or physiological emotion—"a wholesome tingling," as Falstaff would have called it,—of the sensorium, of which, though, I pretend not as yet to have fathomed the philosophy, I have thus come at last to experience the effect. If ever, therefore, I have derided Morrison's customers, or Parr's, when my inner wheels played merrily; if, in buoyant moods, I have sneered at Quakerism; if I have undervalued cold water as a panacea in frosty weather; if I have trifled, in any paroxysm of doubt, with the faith of homoepathists; if I have impugned Mesmerism, Professor Barnet, and the *Limerick Reporter*, under some influence

of temporary insanity, I now heartily repent of this manifold uncharitableness. I ask pardon of the whole world, and mine ancient ally, the *Reporter*. I recognise at length the mysterious power of affrontery. What is man that he should hope to resist it? While grass grows or water runs the pill-vendor must flourish in one shape or another. Law being now in vogue, why, therefore, should law not prevail? Shall any malcontent dare to wrestle with the law?

Mr. Steele (honest Tom) was therefore right: thus my judgment yielded to the working of the spell. What noise was O'Neill making in the Hall about common sense and soforth? What in the name of patriotism had common sense to do there? The cue was law. Common sense may be a mercantile commodity in certain markets. Farmers, traders, and such small deer, may find their account in it; and much good may it do them. But O'Connellite Repealers, look you, Mr. O'Neill,—balmy O'Connellite Repealers—what was common sense to them? Besides, Mr. Costello was actually on his legs, and standing on the law. He wanted merely to define the law, as became him. And was he to be interrupted, at that critical moment, in that critical position, and in the very middle of his sentence? No wonder that Mr. Steele spoke, as the papers report, with warmth. Possibly, if Mr. Costello had been then interrupted O'Neill might have resorted to common sense, like a dog to his vomit, and disgusted the whole audience. But law (mediante Thoma) happily triumphed. The star of the pill predominated. Many queasy stomachs were relieved on the spot; and Old Ireland in general felt wonderfully better.

This law, it is further observable, was forced upon nobody. I noted that circumstance particularly. Every man was left at perfect liberty or be hanged. Just like Morrison. Nay, the alternative was sometimes rather hinted at than expressed, as in that affecting passage where Mr. O'Connell reminds Mr. O'Brien of his personal safety, in tones as gentle as could be addressed to a man who had dropped his pocket handkerchief, or who was forgetting his snuff-box. Who could resist such blandishments? Such a pill, and so administered, what rebellious stomach would not

yearn to be digesting? I confess it once again, before the world, I would have swallowed it any time last Sunday, after two o'clock, if it cost but one-and-sixpence.

But, luckily or unluckily, the price deterred me. I could not resolve for the life of me to gainsay mine own reason; to befoul mine own honour; to abjure gratuitously mine own birthright, inherited by virtue of no human statute or mere Crown patent, but by a title found in constitution of nature, enrolled on the records of creation, and above the reach alike of lawyers and legislators; to herd with sycophants or slanderers, or hypocrites, or bullies; to become a weathercock, however generously gilded; a stalking horse, though I might share the game; a cypher, a catspaw, a cully, though I were to be hanged for it under the very hands of an O'Connell. So I resolved to go to bed as usual, without troubling the medicine man; and to bed, as usual, I accordingly went.

My cogitations next morning were still indeed tinged with some amazement; but all the fascination had vanished in their sober light. Hobgoblins are like suspicions, and suspicions, as Bacon teacheth, are like bats—larger-looking and fearfuller amidst the evening shadows. (Hence it happens that so many pills are taken overnight). I looked again over all the particulars of our baffled reconciliation. I would have grappled with some foe, but the foe seemed to elude my grasp. Dr. Miley speaks somewhere of "risalto," as if he were after achieving it; but, like many a brother artist, he laboured for the effect in vain. There is no risalto in his composition, but only in his vanity. His picture is flat, tame, and indistinct. The Israelites, in fact, have passed over; and King Pharaoh has been drowned since eight o'clock. The first hemstitch of that couplet quoted (as from Tibalds) by the unrivalled master of irony—

I am no schollard, but I am polite,  
Therefore be sure I am no Jacobite—

does not indeed apply to Dr. Miley; but the rest of it, including the logic, expresses the whole body and spirit and value of his frivolous lucubrations. No; the only salient point in the entire transaction is Mr. O'Connell's sad,

strange, and inexplicable hallucination, if it be a hallucination, about the law.

For, Mr. John O'Connell's pious reverence, or Thomas Steele's high-souled devotion, or Dr. Miley's minute politeness, or the nauseous adulation of the Old Ireland Press, which I take to be the basest Press extant in any known country, or the ostracism of common sense from Conciliation Hall, or the shy and silent deportment of all the men of worth in the Empire, including lawyers—these being all matters of course, will give pause to no one. But what is to be thought of Mr. O'Connell's law? Is it a hallucination? Or is it the most barefaced attempt which this world has yet witnessed to bear down, and trample, and kick, and spit upon the intellect of a Nation?

Alas, and alas! that I should feel myself constrained, after much reflection, and, I blush not to acknowledge, frequent vacillations of judgment—for who so misanthropical that would not recoil again and again from a conviction so prejudicial to all faith in man?—to resolve this gloomy doubt by a gloomier decision. Mr. O'Connell's law I adjudge to be no hallucination, but a fraud of the most desperate and unparalleled character. And having at length made up my mind on the point, I, of course, regard his late proposal for a conference as a monster dodge. Not that Mr. O'Connell perhaps anticipated the exact turn which the negotiation has taken; but, whatever turn the negotiation might have taken, that he was resolute and ready to twist it to a captious and a facetious account. The evidence by which I have arrived at this my final opinion is of the species called accumulative. Many weighty doubts having previously arisen, these are a few of the increments which at last overbalanced my reserve.

Throughout these latter proceedings Mr. O'Connell had betaken himself exclusively to the imputed illegality of what he vaguely calls the physical force principle. This illegality, it is assumed, he has always asserted; but before now he used to assert more than this. He was wont to speak of the Gospel as well as of the law. Why is he silent latterly about the Gospel? Have the Irish ceased to be a religious

people? No! but Mr. O'Connell has probably learned that the natural or revealed laws of God are not subject to his interpretation, nor variable as his caprice. They are not framed to stretch under a Tory Government, and then to contract under a Whig; they are not binding in Queen Victoria's dominions and void or doubtful elsewhere. Possibly Mr. O'Connell has been assured by some genteel theologian that the Quaker doctrine of moral force, to which he leant so lovingly, is absolutely a heresy from Catholic truth. These, of course, are only conjectures; but what passes in the heart can only be conjectured from outward signs. Mr. O'Connell has shifted his ground. He has changed his war-cry—he has retreated from the field of truth—he has abandoned the standard of justice—he has entrenched himself in a quibble of law, from which he makes wry faces at the public. I cannot reconcile this change of tactics, without any admission of change,—this omission of untruth, without any expression of repentance,—this noisy and vicious barking on the trail of despotic law,—with supposition of Mr. O'Connell's honesty. To me they rather betoken wile and guile in abundance, and a trifle of malignity to boot.

Again: the original rules of the Repeal Association being found (after the accession to office of the bloody and brutal Whigs) inadequate to the security of Mr. O'Connell's head, he framed the new ones, in his capacity of legal adviser to this Irish Nation. These were become necessary. There was no living any longer without them. He laughed at the simple citizens of Cork for suggesting even a reconsideration of the terms in which they were couched. It could not be done. Even the slightest modification of terms would raise the market price of hemp. Such was the law about four weeks ago. Since then we have heard of no session of Parliament nor of any lost statute miraculously discovered—nor even, what is surprising, of any forgotten effusion of petulant tyranny hunted out by the vile industry of Mr. O'Connell's retainers from the rubbish of judicial dicta; and yet, strange to say, Mr. O'Connell will now not only modify the terms of these new regulations, but is willing, it seems, moreover, if these unmanageable youngsters would



only be satisfied, to strike out from the very heart of them a mass of matter about the size of this terrestrial globe, less by Great Britain. Mr. O'Connell's law, then, has this peculiar quality, that it can be either a chest of drawers or a white rabbit, just as Mr. O'Connell pleases. In my eyes this looks more like conjuring than honest housekeeping; and I care not who hears me say so.

Again: if Mr. O'Connell laid down a definite proposition, and staked his reputation upon such moonshine as the illegality "of the slightest admixture of the physical force principle in the Repeal Association," or "of the mere discussion even of this principle with a view to its adoption," what is to be thought of him—what can be thought of him—but that he is dishonest? I, at least, am forced to that judgment; and, therefore,—still, as ever, speaking for myself,—I now renounce him absolutely as my leader; and, come what will, and vary as he may, I shall ever henceforth, like Mr. Martin, suspect his motives, and rate his opinions and his actions, to the best of my own judgment, at their intrinsic worth, and not a farthing beyond.

If it happen that the general body of the Seceders shall view these recent proceedings in the same light, and, forming a similar conclusion from them, shall resolve to hold on by their purpose of convening a general meeting and organising a Repeal Association with a more single-minded leader—a more straightforward aim—a more liberal spirit—a more uniform and more energetic action—I think they need not be frightened by the bugbear of disunion and those disastrous effects which, in vulgar estimation, it is supposed to produce. I have just read in a chance copy of the *Freeman's Journal* an article from the *Tablet* on this subject, in which the writer, although he is in general sufficiently keen, falls into the common error of mistaking terms for things, and confounding means with ends. Union is a mere instrument—in itself neither good nor evil, and just as powerful for evil as for good. Union is not truth, nor virtue, nor happiness; but truth and virtue tend, through union, as an instrument, to happiness, which is the final end of man and of all human machinations. This instrument,

like all the other gifts of God or devices of men, may be used or abused. To speak of the value of union in the abstract is to speak nonsense. To speak of the evils of disunion is equally nonsensical. Truth and virtue are the kernel of all good; error and vice the origin of all misfortune. A union not centered in virtue is the shell of a blind nut. It is well to break it. An empty hope is dispelled, a lingering disappointment presented. It is a knot of maggots, festering rather than living, and fruitful only of disgust. The only union which has real value is that which binds together good men and true, with good principles, for good ends. Such a union the Seceders may now form, if they are, as I believe, earnest men—if their principles are sound and their aims are just. And if it shall happen, as the healthiest germ may wither for want of any one of the conditions essential to its growth, that this new organisation fails to achieve its destiny, I will beseech our future historians, if only for the comfort of the wise men who shall succeed myself in this glen of Templeberry, to eschew this cant about dissension and disunion when they are accounting for the continued degradation of this wretched land; and to trace the miseries that are now impending over us, if they may not happily be averted, to their real source, in the profligate corruption, the scandalous hypocrisy, the vile bigotry, and the blind servility of our balmy O'Connellites. These are vices to merit Heaven's vengeance, if Lord John were even disposed to overlook the profit he may convert them to; and certainly the nation that can tolerate, countenance and encourage them, whoso can pity, in its extremest need, is *ipso facto* a philosopher.

I remain, my dear Sir,

Your very faithful Servant,

JOHN KENYON, R.C.C.

Chapel House, Templeberry, Dec. 29th.

P.S.—I was near forgetting the new argument of our infidelity. Mr. O'Connell smelt the rat, as cunning as we were, and ran it off, like a tangent. Dr. Miley puts his

handkerchief to his nose forthwith, like Sir John Linger in the famous dialogues. Oh, is it not mawkish? John O'Connell, forsooth, Mr. Steele, and Mr. Broderick must be poking their noses into the concerns of the Church Catholic! This is the short and the long of it. It is infidelity to twitch them by the coat-skirt, or to say: By your leave, red nose!

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### THE CONFEDERATION.

To the Editor of the *Nation*.

Chapel House, Templeberry,  
January 19th, 1847.

My Dear Sir,—Your number of Saturday was indeed a treat. It breathes such a Repeal spirit from every teeming page as our witches of the Hall will not conjure out of their black-letter law books till they can read backwards, I warrant them. Only two passages of the glorious Confederation seem to me open to exception. One is contained in Mr. O'Gorman's resolution, where it gives unlimited power to the original members of the Council to add to their numbers, and especially where it makes members of Parliament, clergymen, and magistrates (becoming members) ex-officio members of the Council. The other is contained in Mr. Haughton's speech, where he "would indignantly refuse the bloodstained contributions of American slaveholders," etc. With that freedom which shall constitute, I hope, the badge and strength of our Confederation, and which, I also hope, shall ensure its success, I mean to discuss these passages under favour of the Irish Party.

Mr. Haughton is, of course, entitled to hold his opinion. I can respect the high instinct of liberty, the keen resentment of wrong, which has led him to embrace it so warmly—which would lead him to exact it at any sacrifice. But I sincerely trust the Council of our Confederation will not adopt it. It is quite an error to suppose that our great and

noble cause would be polluted by receiving such contributions, or that it must not be injured by rejecting them. It is precisely one of the notable blunders of the late Repeal Association. It may be an extreme case—Mr. Haughton, I doubt not, so considers it—but if the case were made an hundredfold worse; if, instead of slave-holders, slave-eaters were substituted in the argument, I should still accept their aid, and thank them for it, to repeal this abominable Union. Turks, Pagans, Atheists, Cannibals, Thugs, Parias, Char-tists, Loupgarous (unless they were indisputable devils), Beggars or Borrowers of money—I would accept honest help from all, and think myself never the worse off therefor. Here are some of my reasons.

If I was drowning; or, good Mr. Haughton, if you were drowning in, let us say, the Ganges, and that one of the Thugs aforesaid, who might chance to be on his travels at the time, offered you the end of the most inconsistent walking-stick imaginable to help you out of your strait, would you spurn the offer, spit in the decent man's face, and choose rather to feed a pair of crocodiles, from sheer virtuous indignation? Indeed, Mr. Haughton, you would not; and I question much if you would even select the exact moment when you were crawling up the bank for preaching him a harsh lecture on Thuggery in general. Now, where is the difference? Money is the algebraist's  $x$ ; it may represent nothing. Let it stand, then, for a walking-stick. Be the slave-holders of America Thugs for the nonce; or Thuggers, if you prefer it. Let the Union be the gulf, and Lord John Russell the pair of crocodiles—and there's an end on't.

Again: if slave-holding be a great crime, daily drunkenness is no joking matter, as yourself, Mr. Haughton, very sensibly feel. There are, in fact, several offences condemned in Holy Writ, and censured by the Church and the world at least as expressly as this vice of slave-holding. How does it happen that the aid, pecuniary or other, of these latter delinquents is understood to imply no guilt in those who merely receive it, while the slave-holder's gold is so fraught with contamination? Answer, good Mr.

Haughton; but do not, I beseech you, disputatiously; do not curl at my tone, for it is a mere trick of the pen, I assure you; but reflect before you answer; apply your honest judgment to the point, and you will, I trust, acknowledge that there is an inconsistency in the policy you recommend; that the enthusiasm of your ardent mind has betrayed you into an error of opinion—and the sooner this error is corrected the better.

Hitherto I have assumed slave-holding to be not only a crime, but a crime of the first magnitude. But it was only for the sake of argument. I am by no means prepared to admit the fact. The Scriptures nowhere formally condemn this crime. The Church has never defined it to be such. Priests and Bishops maintain communion with slave-holders unblamed. They have themselves owned slaves. They may own some yet for anything I know to the contrary. I covet not, indeed, their property; but I will not condemn them for it, either. It has been observed with equal truth and feeling that even the fallen should retain some claim to the forbearance of a fallen race. It may be that slave-holding will be eliminated from Christendom by your fashionable theory of developments. It may be that it will vanish from the earth more naturally, and with less offence to the spirits of defunct scholastics, by the mere influence of spreading civilisation. It may be, too, that it will not. The coil is more tangled, I apprehend, and contains more knots than honest Mr. Haughton might have imagined.

If slave-holding, for instance, were held to be criminal, the crime would affect both parties in the transaction. Wilful slavery must then be a sin. Now, although I have asserted, against the advocates of passive obedience, the right of a slave to free himself if he can—aye, even by physical force—I have no notion whatever of condensing that right into a duty. Everything lawful is not expedient; much less obligatory. Christian patience is a virtue, how-muchsoever ignorant Christians discredit it by false expositions of its nature. And, even against the eloquent and entrancing strain of Mr. Holmes's lofty argument, I shall maintain inviolate the right of voluntary mortification to

free exercise within its legitimate sphere. But this, perhaps, is carrying the joke too far.

In general, I regard the whole question as one whose importance is much exaggerated by fancy, perchance by fanaticism. We are all slaves, in a thousand senses of the word—slaves to time, to space, to circumstance, to the habits of our great-grandfathers on either side, and to the whims of our maternal ancestors in all their nonsensical generations; to fire, air, earth, and water, throughout all their analysis; to tailors—a most galling yoke—snuff, washerwomen, quacks, policemen, umbrellas, London merchants, native millers, and royal engineers. If to all these slaveries there be superadded one other—namely, slavery to slave-holders,—I cannot see that our position will be very essentially deteriorated. But, at all events, flinging back bags of dollars over the Atlantic Ocean into the pockets of these very slave-holders, enriching them at our present expense, is such an Utopian remedy for the supposed evil as only homoeopaths could countenance.

Let us then, Mr. Haughton, in the name of common sense, mind, for the present, our own business. Let us not go so far out of our way, and at such considerable inconvenience, to knock our heads against this theoretical post. Perhaps it is a mere eyesore in the world. If it be an evil, let us prove it first to the slave-holders, with the aid of their own money, after the Union is repealed, and then set about abating it with our surplus funds. If it be an evil, it is no special concern of ours; we shall not be damned for it, though we take useful coins from the evil-doers, no more than for the Thuggery of the man that may have rescued us from the crocodiles; no more than for any other inordinate habits of our members. If it be an evil, may God mend it. I hope the Council of our Confederation will just answer—  
Amen.

Whether this Council ought to consist of a definite or an unlimited number is a question so nice that I would not choose to discuss it, if assured that it had been considerably decided. Being ignorant of the fact, I will merely submit for the present my strong predilection for a deter-

minate number. But the clause of our constitution which makes members of Parliament, clergymen, and magistrates (becoming members) ex-officio members of the Council, I shall expunge, if I can before the ink with which it was written has time to harden. It is a vicious principle: a remnant of the effete routine which we have abandoned, clinging to us, I would hope, unconsciously. What are members of Parliament, clergymen, or magistrates, as such? What they may be, is the question. They may be knaves, or dolts, or cowards: and are knaves, or dolts, or cowards, to be members ex-officio; that is, by virtue of their knavery, noodlehood, or poltoonly, of that Council, which is embodied to achieve the freedom of this land? No! no! Let us have no more ex-officios. Have any numbers of men, limited or unlimited, if it must be so, on your Council; but let them be all, at least, *men*. Let us be sure of that much. The land is sick of ex-officios.

Mr. O'Connell sneers at us because we are only men—connected with a newspaper called the *Nation*. Shall we shrink from the sneer within the shelter of lawn or ermine? No!—we shall rather stand upon our manhood; for only manhood can now avail us. When title is superadded we shall render it all meet respect; but we shall worship golden calves no longer.

I conclude, for the special amusement of the *Waterford Chronicle*, the funniest dog in all old Ireland (the *Pilot* and *Tipperary Vindicator* being of the sulky species), as well as for the instruction of our Council, with a sentiment from a peninsular poet, who was, moreover, a patriot and a man:

Todo rey nacio hombre,  
 Los dictatos vinieron despues  
 Estimemos el hombre por justo  
 No por ser conde ni marques.

And remain, my dear Sir, very faithfully yours,

JOHN KENYON, R.C.C.

## CHAPTER IX.

### O'CONNELL'S POSITION AND CAREER.

To the Editor of the *Nation*.

“Il ne faut craindre rien quand on a tout a craindre.”

My Dear Sir,—Upon seeing your number of last Saturday, the first since first I saw the *Nation* that jarred with my sentiments, the gloom misplaced upon your columns fell heavily on my heart. Whether any section of Irishmen sympathise with my feelings, I cannot know as yet. If not, I shall feel myself reduced to that sad dilemma, occupying the awful confines of madness and despair, when a man must either mistrust his own deliberate judgment or defy the world. Before a full sense of this terrible dilemma was impressed upon my mind I had sent a protest to the resolution which Mr. O'Brien moved at the late Council meeting of our Confederation, and fancied that this resolution would satisfy the exigencies of my condition. Moreover, assuming that your publication reflected the prevalent feeling of our body, the idea of a more public protest was attended, when it occurred to my mind, with several qualms and shrinking scruples. Nevertheless, I failed not to preach from my own altar, under a sense of higher and pressing duty, the principles by which my flock should be guided, in case they were solicited to join in a national demonstration of honour to the mortal remains of O'Connell. But finding, after further reflection, that neither my protest nor my preaching could extricate my spirit from its straits, and feeling with the great tragedian, whose words I have prefixed to this letter, that amidst such an universal ruin as threatens this fated land, all private apprehensions would be ineffably



frivolous, I have resolved to protest openly against your sable borders, and against that resolution of our Council to which I have referred already.

My future interest in public affairs will depend, therefore, entirely upon two things—first, whether you shall publish my sentiments; and, secondly, whether my sentiments shall awaken any echoes in this wilderness of Ireland.

Your weeds of mourning and Mr. O'Brien's resolution imply and express that Mr. O'Connell's demise has been a great loss to Ireland, and that a tribute of national respect is due to his remains. I do not believe in the truth of the fact: I deny the justice of the debt.

Mr. O'Connell's death, in my deliberate opinion, has been no loss whatever to this Irish nation. On the contrary, I think that Mr. O'Connell has been doing before his death, and was likely to continue doing as long as he might live, very grievous injury to Ireland; so that I account his death rather a gain than a loss to the country. He was the vaunted leader, the prime mover, the head and front, the life and soul of a system of policy so servile at once and despotic, so hollow and corrupt, so barefacedly hypocritical, and so dreadfully demoralising, that the very organs of the Government to which it pandered laughed it to scorn. That his slavish minions, his selfish followers, or his deluded dupes should have deemed his death a loss I was prepared to learn; but that the Irish Confederates, whom he insulted, spurned, and would have hanged—the representatives of the manhood of the nation which he was degrading, which he had degraded into brutish beggary—that these should adopt the error, and make it the foundation of a further and more fatal mistake, this was an event for which I was utterly unprepared—a midnight inundation from which I know not where to hope for shelter. All seems confusion, and it is intensely dark.

While denying that any tribute of national respect is due, or ought to be paid, to the remains of O'Connell, I would guard myself, although indeed it concerns me little, against an imputation of either bigotry or resentment. As far as it is possible for a man to judge correctly of his own dis-

position, I have a conviction that I am as little of a bigot as may be, and I entertain no shade of personal resentment against any human being living or dead. I would follow a dead Turk to the grave if he were worthy of the compliment, and if it came in my way to pay it; infinitely sooner, therefore, would I pay the same respect to O'Connell in the same way of neighbourly civility. But to co-operate, as an Irishman, in a tribute of national respect to his memory, I should esteem the meanest self-abasement—cruellest mockery of a solemn rite—the stupidest insensibility to the merits of right and wrong, to the nature of rewards and punishments—the insanest perversion, or indeed the absolute annihilation of all true, holy and just instincts.

It is difficult, I admit, perhaps impossible, to understand why it is that the last act or state of a man shall determine his character finally and for ever. Why a traitor shall not be applauded, though he may have been previously loyal. Why a poisoner shall not be rewarded, though he may have been charitable for years. Why a calumniator shall not be asked to dine with you, though he may have been the friend of your youth. Why a sinner shall be damned, though he may have glorified God till his hair blanched. This may be a mystery; but it is certainly a truth, warranted alike by divine faith and by daily experience. Man's identity cannot be severed. He is what he is, not what he was. You cannot reward or punish an abstraction, a fragmental character. If you justly respect a man he must be respectable in his totality. If a nation justly respects him he must be a benefactor, a blessing to that nation. O'Connell is not such. He befooled this country before his death, and he died politically impenitent. Ireland, therefore, owes him nothing but forgiveness. If she gives him more, and to the extent to which she shall give him more, then, and in that proportion, will she unsettle the principles of public morality, incapacitate herself from rewarding honesty and fidelity, and brand herself with infamy throughout the coming years.

The motives which may have seduced you, my dear Sir, and our Council into this disheartening and disastrous pro-

cedure I, of course, know not; but some of the motives which most probably have misguided you I can easily overturn. A dread of unpopularity I would not readily impute to you, knowing how thoroughly you understand and how heartily you despise the elements of which that worthless monster, that blatant beast, popularity, has been compounded of late in Ireland. Yet it is true that many men, valiant in an onset, will sink under the recurring hardships of daily duty. And if, indeed, you have swerved from rectitude under that continued pressure from around, then I only wish you had never dared to be independent.

If an apprehension of exasperating dissensions turned your heads astray, I would solemnly submit to your immediate consideration that such apprehensions belong to that class of temporary expedients, involving a dereliction of principle for a hope of present good, in which Mr. O'Connell himself lived, and moved, and had his being, and of the utter vanity of which his fate is a most signal warning. I believe in that sentiment of Carlyle's, the solitary light in your last dark number, that every cause, "so far as it is true, no farther, yet precisely so far, is very sure of victory: the falsehood of it alone will be conquered." So have all Mr. O'Connell's makeshifts, those emanations of superhuman prudence, for which he was so magnified by his worshippers, ended in bitterness and untimely ashes. They were conquered by an overruling Providence. So, too, will this makeshift of yours be conquered; while the truth of your cause and of his, overlaid and trammelled, it may be, for a time and times, by these incumbrances, perishable and to perish, co-operating still with the world's eternal tendencies, shall eventually triumph. I believe, with another Scotch philosopher, "that the external nature is not so constituted that the intellect can in any case possess sufficient data for inferring actual benefit from conduct which is disowned and denounced by the moral sentiments." All my moral sentiments of sincerity, honour, justice, truth, disown and denounce your conduct, and my intellect renounces the idea that any good can come of it.

Over and above the essential emptiness of your hope—

over and above the danger inherent in every deviation from right, I can even see, staring into my face, an overwhelming vanity, a manifold and manifest peril in the policy you have adopted. You assist in creating a national demonstration of grief at O'Connell's funeral. If he merits that to-day, why did you oppose him yesterday? Out of your own mouths, verily, you shall be condemned. How could you avoid seeing that Conciliation Hall, and its no-principles, and its hereditary despotism, and its slavery, and its sycophancy, and its corruption, and its no-drop-of-blood-but-every-ounce-of-flesh theory, and its barefaced beggary, will suck fresh vitality from your tainted characters? If your resolution was just, if your grief was called for, such imminent danger might almost warrant you in suppressing it; but that you should court the risk at such enormous expense of consistency and equity, that you should court it for the express purpose of inducing your country, long treated as a hound by O'Connell, with more than houndish servility to howl over his bier, this is that midnight inundation from which I see no way to escape.

So far I have addressed myself to you, Sir, and to the Council of the Irish Confederation, arguing on our common principles. But I will not conclude without appealing to the Irish public at large. Is it possible that this nation can remain infatuated for ever? O'Connell has boasted that he has guided us, and his toadies have vouched every word he told us, for fifty years. Well, then, let us look about and calculate our obligations for the service. Whither have we been guided? Where and how has he left us? We have been guided, step by step, self-hoodwinked, to such an abyss of physical and moral misery—to such a condition of helpless and hopeless degradation, as no race of mankind was ever plunged in since the creation. We are a nation of beggars—mean, shameless, and lying beggars. And this is where O'Connell has guided us. But it will be said that he could not help this. I deny it. No man ever enjoyed or abused such resources as, in the extravagance of our devotion, we lavished on O'Connell. Since I was able to think or act as a man, till within a twelvemonth, he had

me, with all that God gave me, of thought, and life, and goods, at his command. And my case was the case of millions. Had O'Connell been moulded in a juster type—had he cultivated the virtues which it was his duty to cherish, of integrity, frugality, sincerity—had he studied his plans maturely, and pursued them consistently—had he been liberal of judgment, and sparing in equal proportions of monies, of censure, and of praise—had he cultivated disinterestedness amongst his followers, and selected his counsellors from the ranks of honesty and virtue, there is no destiny too glorious to which he might not have conducted Ireland. But, unfortunately for his fame and his country, he was a mere time-serving politician—a huxter of expediences. He said things, and did them not. He issued orders, and jeered the men who obeyed him, as the powder-monkies of Cork can testify. He patronised liars, parasites, and bullies. He brooked no greatness that grovelled not at his feet. He conducted a petty traffic in instalments. He boasted. He flattered grossly, and was grossly flattered. He forestalled his glory, and enjoyed with relish a reputation that he forgot to earn. Above all, he was unsteady, because he was unprincipled. The gentry of Ireland could never unite with him, and no man in the land could calculate upon his policy for a month. Thus the lives, and loves, and treasures of this trusting land were frittered into nought—thus were our resources squandered, our hopes thus levelled to the grave.

I deny not the good points of O'Connell's character. And if I do not enumerate them it is only because all his points, good, bad and indifferent, have been extolled over-frequently and over-much. He was, all in all, *un grand homme manqué*, possessing great elements of greatness, but alloyed below the standard. He failed in his mission, and he deserved to fail in it. The real liberators of nations have steered a straight course. Instead of stultifying ourselves by another national demonstration, we should rather study the ways of Providence for our instruction, and learn from the signal failure of O'Connell a lesson of greater confidence in God's truth, and less trust in man's devices.

I conclude by admitting the generosity of Mr. O'Brien's motive in moving the resolution—by recognising the loftiness of your aim in penning panegyrics and wearing crape on this occasion—by repeating my thorough conviction that you have all committed a mistake most ominous of mischief, and by hoping against hope that you may have still the spirit to correct it.

Your faithful servant,

JOHN KENYON, R.C.C.

## CHAPTER X.

### LETTERS TO THE "UNITED IRISHMAN" AND "NATION."

"Chapel House, Templederry,  
"Feb. 8th, 1848.

"Dear Mr. Mitchel,—You will not be displeased, I hope, if I yield to the ambition of appearing in the first number of the *United Irishman* as your admirer and friend. Nay, though I should venture to question some of your purposes, or even presume to advise you without an invitation, you will still, I am confident, take it all in good part. You will not expect to extinguish thought in a dash of ink, to curtail dissent with a twopenny scissors, or to escape remonstrance by throwing it into the fire. You mean, do you not, to distinguish your journal for ever, that is, at least for a thousand years, by a liberality as large as nature; to float it fearlessly over the boundless ocean of opinion,

Where the tides are fresh for ever,  
And the mighty currents free,

an ark in which the lovers of free discussion may find a certain refuge from the conventional despotism of the periodical press.

Well, then, with reference to this, your presumed intention, I have two advices to offer. First, that you write out at large, in a legible hand, in a book provided for that special object, the reasons of your present determination; and take a solemn oath to read the same attentively at least once in every six months during your natural life. All flesh is grass, and every heart of man is prone to change, and time impairs and power corrupts the strongest and the

purest intentions ; and, in a word, if you omit that precaution, like all other heretics, schismatics, seceders, and remonstrants of whom history takes notice, you may lapse into the very vices which first provoked your indignation.

“In my own little experience I have had several opportunities to admire the consequences of neglecting this precaution or of some original error of principles, as displayed in the conduct of some of our most pretentious newspaper editors. The *Limerick Reporter*, the *Cork Examiner*, the *Nation*, and the *Evening Packet* have at various times, and for various reasons, felt themselves authorised or obliged to suppress my communications ; some of them repeatedly—some after I had been plentifully assailed in public, and when I might expect the privilege of being heard in defence ; some after they had libelled me themselves, and permitted others to libel me in their columns when I might claim the right of rebutting the libels and exposing the infamy of my slanderers—some, in fine, without even noticing the suppression, which I account the worst tyranny of all, as it is not only a murdering of thought, but a burying of it in the dark without any stone or slab to indicate that it ever had a being. On all these occasions the respective editors were moved, as I have admitted, either by interest or policy. But if these temporary, casual, or special reasons be referred to a wider philosophy, and measured by the perpetual motion of thoughts and events, how straitened must they appear ? I wonder it never occurs to these supreme arbiters of expediency that the world went on before they were born, and will probably continue moving, after they shall have ceased to manage it, just as well (or thereabouts) as it is going on at present. If there was any manifest or visible improvement even in Ireland, beyond what existed at any former period, I admit, indeed, that some of these editors would only make an ordinary mistake if they attributed the improvement to their excelling vigilance and extreme circumspection in the management of their papers. But when no such great and valuable result is in being, it really seems to me an extraordinary mistake of these worthy gentlemen to imagine that it is they, respectively, who are balancing



the world duly, and keeping the universe at large within becoming bounds.

The second advice, dear Mr. Mitchel, which I presume to offer you on this topic is, maturely to consider and wisely to define the limits, and necessary limits, to this liberality, which you intend to realise in the conduct of your journal. For, after all, there are limits, and necessary limits, to liberality. The universe is swayed by eternal order. To assert absolute liberty, even in the department of thought, would be to blunder in philosophy; in religion to rebel against the high dominion of our Sovereign Creator. A man cannot, if he will, and may not, if he can, transcend the elemental laws of his being, and the freest thinkers by profession are often, consequently, as narrow-minded as they need be. Freedom, therefore, has its limitations, both general and particular. The difficulty is to determine in each instance what these are and how far they extend.

As respects human thought and its manifestations, whether by tongue, pen, or printing press, the natural and revealed laws of God are the only limits to freedom which I am disposed to recognise. These laws themselves, I am well aware, have been made a subject of infinite disputation. But into that dispute I may not enter here, and must confine myself to the general proposition, that no man is at liberty to blaspheme against his Creator, even though his stamp-office recognizances were cancelled in that regard. When human law, however, makes the expression of truth or the assertion of right libellous, seditious, or treasonable, I believe it is an abuse of power, and that it is not binding on the conscience. Nevertheless while it remains clothed with authority it will make itself respected through fear or prudence; and, therefore, in practice, law must be attended to as well as morality in the publication of opinions. Mr. Byrne, one of the speakers at your late discussion, was met, as I read in the newspapers, with shouts of derisive laughter for expressing sentiments to this effect. Take care, my dear sir, and do not laugh at him. The morality of all illegal acts, from libel to a rebellion, depends on the self-same condition, which is the probability of their success or,

at least, of their immunity. This probability, I admit, is quite compatible with personal danger, suffering, or death—nay, even with defeat (and I do not think Mr. Byrne meant otherwise); but if it do not exist, then any illegal act is criminal and silly. Mark down, therefore, I pray you, this limitation in your book.

As for the rest, nonsense being an offence against the natural law, I do not argue, of course, for the liberty of publishing it. And yet there lies herein no inconsiderable difficulty. For, every editor of a newspaper presumes to arbitrate summarily on all affairs of nonsense. Yet meaner intellects than Plato's will understand that nonsense is just as difficult of apprehension as sense; and that, therefore, no man is authorised, except at his peril, to define it. For a practical rule in this preplexity, I will, therefore, maintain that when a man of fair character, who has never been confined in a lunatic asylum, and who can spell correctly at least five words out of six, writes to a newspaper on a subject of public interest, and sings his name to his letter, such letter should be deemed, *prima facie*, sensible.

Dishonesty and inconsistency, when they are palpable and notorious, like John O'Connell's, disqualify any opinion for publication, simply because they alter it into a pretence. This point is sufficiently clear. Want of space, when it is not occasioned culpably by the insertion of chit-chat, driftless stories, quack advertisements, or leaders that go nowhere, is also a fair and sufficient excuse for rejecting communications that may be too lengthy or importunate. But scurrility must never be pleaded by an editor of true liberality. First, because at worst, it is a minor offence, and not to be set off against the wit or wisdom that often accompany it. Secondly, because over-fastidiousness is the prevailing habit of our age. But principally because it is hardly ever pleaded unless when the editor himself or some particular friend of his is sorely pinched, and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred it is a disingenuous and cowardly plea. It follows, then, in general, as a rule of limitation, that those opinions should only be suppressed by a liberal editor which are immoral, illegal, or nonsensical. Beyond these limits,

to restrict discussion is a tyrannical proceeding; and if the proper time and occasion for entering on a discussion are themselves disputed or disputable, dogmatically to determine these I conceive to be an infringement of liberty. Having thus dispatched my advices, I shall now, under your continued indulgence, deliver myself of my opinions upon some of the matters lately debated, and upon such incidents of the debate as appear to me worthy of comment.

Touching these matters, I could wish, in the first place, that all Irishmen were armed, and were able to use their arms. I do not believe that the possession of arms leads to perpetration of crime. And though it did in particular instances, yet the possession of hands and eyes, and noses and ears and mouths—in short, of bodies and souls,—leads also occasionally to crime without being therefore an evil, so it may be with arms. I indulge that wish because in opposition to all Quakers, and Quakerly-disposed persons, I believe firmly in the lawfulness of war, because I have no faith in the perfectability of human nature, or in the advent of the millenium, and because I count it among the duties of all freemen, and of all men aspiring to be free, to be prepared more or less according to the varying circumstances of their condition, to wage war in defence of their hearths and altars, or for the maintenance of their properties, their liberties, and their lives.

In the second place, I could wish our amended Poor Law, with all its trumpery of Twistletons, etc., abrogated this instant. I believe that this law, and all the laws relating to relief which preceded it since the famine (and I may add in parenthesis, all laws before the famine), have tended to delude and destroy our people. I believe that the English legislature has on all occasions interfered in Irish concerns to the prejudice of Ireland, and that our people could not possibly be in a worse condition, and would not probably be in half so bad, if no measures of pretended relief had ever been enacted into law. But though some partial suffering should certainly arise in consequence of the sudden obstruction of this Poor Law, I would welcome the suffering so arising as a national blessing, compared to the lingering

death and perpetual misery to which we seem now eternally and irrevocably doomed.

In the third place, I do despair of a unity of classes in Ireland, as a result of moral-force agitation. It is not in nature or in history that the bodies of men will yield up their interests on mere speculative considerations of property, no matter how iniquitously those interests have been acquired, or how iniquitously they continue to be supported. Well, moral-force agitation in Ireland is universally considered to be a mere speculation. It is ethical. It is balmy. It starts and snorts at the smell of blood, like a horse at a tan-yard. Our hierarchy, such of them as write in newspapers, encourage this opinion. Long lists of obsequious clergymen of the second order strengthen it. It is firmly believed by the corporation of landed proprietors; and accordingly they laugh at moral-force agitation, and assert all their rights at the point of the law. With all possible respect for individuals of this order, I could heartily wish that the order were humbled—nay, even at the expense of individual hardship, that it were abolished, if necessary for the public welfare.

Nor do I think such a disposition of mind antagonistic to any principle or rule of our Confederation. We aim, to be sure, at a combination of classes, for the overthrow of the English legislative dominion. But this is to be understood of a moral, not of a mathematical combination. We do not expect the military class to join us, nor the police, nor the stipendiary magistrates, nor the Five-pound-Royal-National-Conciliation-Hall-thorough-going-O'Connellite-Repealers,—why? Because they are part and parcel of the English interest in Ireland. If, therefore, the landlord class, linked with that same English interest, persist in opposing themselves to the wishes and wants of our people—say, rather in grinding and crushing them, soul and body, heart and hope,—why should we insist upon their company, with such a waste of time and hope, and peradventure of opportunity?

This much only I purpose saying on the matter of your late debate; because I am not versed in law, and cannot undertake to say how far the Confederation may have been obliged

in prudence (supposing them agreed that prudence was to be the cue) to protect themselves against a legal prosecution, or how far the resolutions which they passed on Friday may serve them as such protection. Only, I must observe, that you seem to me a great deal more sanguine as to the success of your methods of repealing the Union than, with all my hearty wishes, I can bring myself to be.

Upon the arguments of your opponents in the debate I would now offer a few remarks. But considering the length to which I have already trespassed, and the probable press upon your first number, they shall be very few. Indeed, after one second's further consideration, I have resolved to restrict them to the single speech of Mr. Meagher, which, perhaps because it was imperfectly reported, read to me rather incoherent and unsatisfactory. For a long time, while he was speaking of the propriety of surceasing the vague talk that has been current about a "crisis at hand," "the age of Louis Phillipe," etc., I thought he should conclude upon the expediency of taking measures in time, that we may not be caught in a state of disorganisation when a state of organisation might stand us in better stead. Instead of which he arrives at a conclusion contained in one of his premises; and because that "a deliberate plan of action," in his judgment is essential, he votes in favour of a constitutional movement; as if natural movements, or any other movements, may not be conducted on as deliberate a plan of action as constitutional.

Now, for my part, without insisting on the circumstances that there is nothing unconstitutional either in the arming of our people, the passive resistance of a ruinous tax, or the humbling of an incorrigible class of our fellow-countrymen, and bringing them, if possible, to a sense of their duties, I entirely object to this assumed necessity for success of a deliberate "plan of action," or, as it had been otherwise expressed, of "a predetermined scheme of policy deliberately framed and systematically worked out to its issue." Such an assertion savours strongly of the dogmatic and arrogant spirit of human pride. I do not believe that the wisdom of man, in that predetermined scheming, de-

liberative active and systematic sense, exercises a tenth part of the influence upon human affairs which its votaries imagine. I do not believe that only one road leads to success. My notions of philosophy and of religion rather lead me to think that men are simply to do their respective duties straight ahead, without over-troubling themselves as to how it shall please Providence to shape the ends of their rough-hewing; that those duties are infinitely various according to the variety of human complexions; and that all, when faithfully executed, tend to complete the destinies of humanity. All analogies—indeed all creation, with its infinite orders so infinitely diversified, and yet so indissolubly connected, marching through time like a steamship through the ocean, to the music of its own harmonious machinery, with a mystery of action and reaction beyond the scrutiny of the sage, or even the vision of the poet,—the whole texture of creation seems to me repugnant to the pretensions of those exclusionists who would seem disposed to deny the possibility of all things which had not the fortune of enjoying beforehand this distinguished consideration.

Nor am I at all satisfied that history anywhere contravenes these notions of mine, or supports the assumption I am impugning. I rather think that when men or nations have ever achieved a purpose on which their hearts were fixed their success was owing, not to an exact observance of a predetermined plan of action, but to the earnest intensity of their resolve, shaped and moulded and altered by time, circumstance and opportunity, into various courses, but straining ever and stretching to the wished-for goal. And if a spirit thus earnest, resolute, intense, now animated Ireland, I would feel little anxiety for the result, whatever shape the struggle might assume. It is the spirit that quickeneth. Without such a spirit all plans, the best devised, the most maturely pondered, the most eloquently set forth, are empty formulas dropping still-born from the brain.

On the whole, then, it is my opinion that the speakers in the late debate missed the real question at issue. The technical value of their speeches and resolutions I have declared myself unqualified to appreciate. But with reference to the

end and aim of our Confederacy, I do think the question was not, and is not, what road we shall walk in, but how we shall be animated with a determination of moving a foot; that a soul, and not a programme, is the one thing needful for our freedom; and that for the creation of this soul within the death-ribs of our country *your* method in the main is more hopeful and to the purpose.

I am, dear Mr. Mitchel,

With very hearty regard,

Faithfully yours,

JOHN KENYON, V.P.

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Chapel House, Templeberry,

February 19th.

My dear Sir,—I enclose for publication, if you shall think it expedient, my letter which the *Nation* declined to publish last summer. Since that time it has been frequently enquired after, and I make no doubt that some remnant of interest may attach to it still. At worst, then, it may gratify an innocent curiosity; but if the sentiments which it was intended to sustain be just, and more especially if they, or any of them, be applicable to the present condition of our affairs, it may be absolutely as serviceable as if composed for the occasion.

Respecting the justness of the sentiments, my judgment is in no respect altered, unless, perhaps, it has been more and more strengthened the more I have reflected upon it. Not all the clamour of our factious press; not all the disgust felt towards me, or pretended to be felt by knaves or zealots, have affected that judgment in the least particular, or even occasioned me to repent having then and so published it to the world. Yet I was not, and am not, indifferent to the good

opinion of worthy and honest men. I would not lightly offend even one man of that character. But if a thousand worthy and honest men—and I doubt if there are a thousand so minded—opposed their prejudices to a purpose which I deemed solemn and salutary, I could incur their united contempt and glory in it, for the furtherance of such a purpose. I am not so unacquainted with my compatriots or so unread in the chronicles of other days as not to know how liable to error is the *popularis aura* ; how often it has borne hard against the virtuous and brave ; how often it has exalted the corrupt impostor ; how many men who might otherwise have enjoyed a fair renown have made shipwreck of their character by meanly yielding to its pressure ; how many others by braving it ,even unto death, have won imperishable fame. I do not conceal from myself that fanaticism, too, may feed upon such reflections as these. I am aware that no human creature is exempt from error. I only mean to intimate that I have considered the whole subject to the best of my ability ; that I have deliberately chosen my part ; and that I am content with all the consequences. I may here add, however, that a large number of respectable gentlemen, from all parts of Ireland, and of liberal politics, have communicated to me in private their full approbation of the course which I then pursued. A fact which proves incontestably that a large amount of opinion, widely spread and deeply felt, is utterly unrepresented in what are called the organs of liberal opinion.

Considering the applicability of some of those sentiments to the present posture of affairs, I have a word to speak. "Moral force" is still a moot point with our politicians, and is likely, I fear, to continue so. On this subject I venture to direct attention to the concluding paragraph of my letter, which, it will be borne in mind, was written before the late elections. Since the Limerick election I have heard it rumoured—I know not how truly or how prematurely—that the Mayor of that era—he of the singing idiot\*—has had his son quartered on the Customs at a handsome salary ; and the

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\* See Letter to the Editor of the *Limerick Reporter* page 18.



very ruffian who proclaimed in open court that if he were near enough to me he would "knock my eye out" has been rewarded with the post of bell-man, or postman, according to his deserts. These rumours, though they should be unfounded, are at least significant, and they acquire a certain probability from the fact stated in the newspapers that Mr. John Thomas Devit has thought it not incompatible with his public credit or his private interest to slink into a shy and silent berth in the Poor Law Department; and also from this other fact, that the proprietor of the moral-force newspaper in that city, a member of the Town Council, who, of course, may himself aspire to the highest civic honours, has moved for, and obtained, an increase of the Mayor's salary. It is probable that in other places like causes have led to like results; and such causes go far, I think, to verify my quasi-prophecy of June the 7th.

To explain how this moral force—this filthy caricature of virtue—this vile profanation of holy patriotism—how this brazen calf is still worshipped by such multitudes of our people is indeed a most perplexing problem. Some people account for it by the explanation that the mass of our population is corrupt—that they knowingly and willingly, and with all their eyes open, do for selfish purposes perpetrate the scandalous pretence, and sacrifice for some expected garbage the honour and dignity and welfare of the nation. But, still confining my discourse to Limerick, I must dissent from this solution of the mystery. I know that in both extremes of society, there as elsewhere, there is a stagnant mass of corruption; that the ignorant mob, so to call it, may be purchased any day for porter, and the enlightened mob for place. But I will never consent to judge so unfavourably of the middle classes, whether tradesmen or shopkeepers. I have imbibed, I think, a thorough knowledge of these classes with my mother's milk, and I hold fast by the faith of their sterling honesty. They are misled, and it is not easy to blame them for it. A mist hangs over their eyes. They are for fifty years labouring under a very bad course of education. They have been brought to under-value truth and consistency, if not indeed to despise these old-fashioned vir-

tues; they have been brought to distrust the use of their reasoning faculties, if not indeed to neglect it entirely, and place it "in commission"; and they have, therefore, no means left them of detecting knavery, or of discerning an honest man by looking into his face. Yet they constitute, such as they are, the worth and the hope of Ireland, as well and truly, in my judgment, as the corresponding class of tenant farmers, and as such they must be regarded with a pitying love. They will yet come round. They shall. And when they do, the sacrifices which they have hitherto made in the dark, only to advance the interests of a few heartless schemers, will merely have foreshadowed those sterner trials which, with a clearer insight and a nearer aim, they shall endure and surmount for the disenthralment of their native soil, and of their children's children.

I am, my dear Sir,

Very faithfully yours,

JOHN KENYON, V.P.

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Chapel House, Templeberry,  
June 7th, 1847.

My dear Sir,—It is not my purpose to fret the public, or to wear out your liberality by importunate remonstrance. There is a point beyond which controversy becomes worse than idle; it is where men from the same premises deduce opposite conclusions. Yet the question between us is of such magnitude, the error on either side is of such a pernicious quality—poisoning the very well-spring of historic truth—that I hesitate, yet a moment, to believe that point attained. I shall endeavour, in what I now write, to guard against a common error of disputants, which is to deviate from the main issue into incidental arguments. For this end I shall abstain altogether from noting several expressions of yours that appear

to me inaccurate and apt to mislead. I shall avoid still more carefully the use of those arguments called "ad hominem," of which a person who should aim at victory rather than truth should be quick to avail himself. The truth which I assert is sufficiently melancholy, my position abundantly ungracious, to banish from my mind the poor ambition of a triumph.

As far as I can appreciate the motive which led you to adopt, and which leads you to persist in, the policy which I repudiate, is based on a mistake which I find repeated in two of your sentences, and which, if it be indeed the cause of your delusion, I will not despair to see rectified. These are the sentences: "Motives are the criterion in morals, and we do not think O'Connell's motives were base"; and: "And though it is true that he missed, or flung away, great opportunities, moral and political, we are not called upon to discredit his memory for this unless we believe he did so corruptly." Before unravelling the fallacy of these sentences I must observe, as a matter of very serious importance, that in the latter of them the matter between you and me is not correctly stated. I sought not to discredit O'Connell's memory. If you had not volunteered to organise a demonstration of national respect for it I had most probably let it rest in the charity of silence; most certainly I should have done so were a demonstration of national respect for it in no wise attempted. You were the unjust aggressor; and the fair question, therefore, is this: Whether you were called on to credit O'Connell's memory for such national service as rendered this national demonstration of gratitude imperative upon Ireland. I insist that you were not; and thus demonstrate your mistake.

Motives are not the criterion of morals. They are only a criterion. Good motives may palliate misconduct; they cannot justify it—much less can they glorify it. I do not think, any more than you, that O'Connell's motives were base, or that he acted corruptly; although I did suspect his sincerity before it was known that he was suffering under a brain disease. But his conduct was most prejudicial to the morals and to the character of this country; and such conduct, by

whatever motives excused, merits at most forgiveness, but disentitles him to reward. Even where motives and conduct were both unexceptional the old Romans, it is known, denied the crown to their unsuccessful generals—nay, actually disgraced them. Athens and Lacedaemon had almost invariably acted on the same principle. And other nations, then and since, have imitated this Roman or Spartan rigour, with, however, I admit, more policy than justice. But where the conduct was as infamous as the results were disastrous, to squander fame on the strength of good motives, whose goodness, after all, can be known only to God, betokens, in my judgment, a most spentrift spirit that must leave this Irish nation a bankrupt, when, mayhap, her true deliverer may sue for his reward.

This, my reasoning, is summed up in that aphorism of the schoolmen: "*Bonum ex integra causa.*" Its truth is irreconcilable with your opinion, and will conquer it. Judged in his totality, O'Connell deserved at the time of his death no gratitude from Ireland, and was entitled to no respect. As the tree fell, therefore, it should be suffered to lie. I do really wonder how this dictate of plainest equity could have appeared to you in the light of a "terrible Mosaic law of vengeance." It is a law of Christian justice, rather, and of primeval nature. If it could be abolished, one of the strongest incentives to virtue—one of its holiest sanctions—would be removed. Perseverance in good were no longer a necessity. In the degree that you conspire to abolish it, and that your conspiracy succeeds, in the same proportion, I repeat it, you unsettle the foundations of public morality.

Whether it is a wisdom I have imbibed in these mountain solitudes, or a folly that has grown upon me or within me, or whether it is a mere natural revulsion of enthusiasm, over-strained and disappointed, I know not; but I confess it now appears doubtful to me if O'Connell would have merited this intended pomp though he had died in '43. That in his "buoyant youth and cheerful manhood" he meant and rendered service to his nation I will not deny; but I say it confidently, he has had his reward. No national benefactor ever enjoyed himself so much on the credit of his services. He

ate always heartily, drank what he liked, and slept (I suppose) upon feathers. His jokes were always relished, as indeed they deserved to be; and his faults were less censured by his admirers than perhaps was for the good of either. Other patriots, struggling for Right, had staked upon the issue life and limb and princely domains, and after years of bodily toil perished, amid the ruins of their family fortunes, in the trench or on the scaffold, or in exile, pinched and lonely, with the glow of their young devotion undimmed by a regret. Others again, victorious in the same immortal strife, now shining as stars of human freedom and glory through the spaces of history, were invested with a smaller lion's share of renown, after the consummation of their task, than has been appropriated by O'Connell for his comparatively insignificant achievement. Making all possible allowances for the danger of under-valuing a prophet in his own country, I cannot persuade myself, since the scales have fallen from my eyes, but that O'Connell has been grievously over-rated; and that, when judged by Time and impartial Truth, he will be as nothing compared to those men of diviner mould who dared to renounce themselves, while stamping the world with their fame.

Again, my dear Sir, I beseech you, with the greatest respect, but with infinite earnestness, rather to let us forget O'Connell, at least until we grow cool, than to keep dinning into our jaded ears upon that everlasting anvil of his greatness. If he did indeed invent that ethical steam-engine of moral force, in spite of the Devil and Doctor Faustus (who have both prior claims to the invention, whatever Mr. Steele may doubt to the contrary), let us wait yet a season to study its further utility. I am much mistaken if you and the Confederation, unless you are shorter-lived than I wish you to be, will not live to execrate the memory of the man (that memory which you are still so prone to honour) who afflicted his country with such a loathsome legacy.

Still confiding in your integrity, and undespairing of your conversion, I remain, most faithfully, your humble servant,

JOHN KENYON, R.C.C.

## CHAPTER XI.

### SPEECH AT MEETING OF THE IRISH CONFEDERATION, 30th AUGUST, 1847.

Father Kenyon visited Dublin in the last week of August, 1847. His Confederate friends were all familiar with his strong views on the subject of place-hunting—a public practice then notoriously carried on. He had spoken previously in Conciliation Hall—notably on the subject of the Provincial Colleges Bill, and on the Peace Resolutions—and had left it with the Young Ireland Party on 28th July, 1846. A general meeting of the Confederation was fixed for Monday evening, 30th August. The resolution on the agenda bearing on the principles of the Confederation “respecting the incompatibility of patriotism and place-begging” was entrusted to Father Kenyon to propose.

His appearance amongst the speakers was greeted with the utmost enthusiasm. Always popular, he was, since the elections, lionised. The assembled Confederates signalled his presence amongst them by a long outburst of cheering when he arose to speak. He read the following resolution:—

*“That the principles of this Confederation respecting the incompatibility of patriotism and place-begging have been sufficiently approved at the late elections to inspire us with a firmer assurance that they shall yet predominate throughout the land, and that those constituencies who, solely moved by their own sense of right, have reduced those principles to action and advanced them to triumph have well merited of their country.”*

Before speaking a few words in comment on that resolution, he begged leave to thank the meeting for the kind and flattering reception he had received on his first appearance in that hall. It filled him with pride and satisfaction, although he could attribute their kindness to no merits of his, but their love of the cause he advocated. He would endeavour to explain that resolution, as it was important that it should be fully and generally understood. Patriotism, as he defined it, was a determination to struggle for the Repeal of the Union and he would prove that position.

It could not be controverted that the Union was the cause of all the misery which had befallen this country. It was, however, well to know what that cause was. He need not enter into details to prove that fact; many abler and better had before shown it. The first argument he would adduce was that the present condition of this country was undeniably one of the greatest destitution and misery—misery without a parallel in any country on the face of the globe (hear, hear). That misery must have proceeded from English dominion, because it could not proceed from any deficiency of soil or climate, nor from any fault of the inhabitants. The soil was as fruitful, the climate as genial, as any in the world; the inhabitants were industrious, and though, perhaps, there might be some faults to be found amongst them, yet those were not such as to account for the difference between the position of this country and that of others (hear, hear). Had France or America, or the bugbear of Russia, interfered or meddled in her affairs? No;

but England had, and yet held Ireland in her clutches. If he had a house well stocked with every proper necessary, and if that house was stripped and robbed, and if nothing was left in it but a few starved mice (laughter), and that no one had recourse to that house except one certain family who were known to go in and out and frequent that house, what would the plundered owner of that house think or say? Could he have any doubt as to who was the despoiler of his property? Would he not feel satisfied that the parties who alone had recourse to his house had plundered and robbed him? (hear, hear). Yet thus it was with Ireland. England was the only nation whose baneful intercourse had robbed Ireland of her wealth and drained all her resources. Yes, England had been the shameless plunderer of Ireland, and had treated her people in a manner disgraceful in the eyes of the world (hear, hear). Therefore, by that, his first argument, he proved that true patriotism consisted in the endeavour to shake off that unjust and usurped dominion (cheers).

The second argument, proving that England was the cause of Ireland's many miseries, he would deduce from the well-known fact that England had long and seduously sought the Union with Ireland (hear, hear). She had sought it perseveringly and unceasingly. She had stooped to every unworthy artifice, she had used means the most cruel and unjust to effect the Union. He need not detail those means, nor dwell on the hateful expedients by which that end had been consummated. It was enough to say that England sought



that union with all a miser's intense avidity in search of gold, and that when obtained she clutched it with a miser's grasp (hear, hear). He argued that no one interfered with the concerns of another out of motives of pure philanthropy (hear, hear). It was not usual to hear of one man insisting on doing another man's work for nothing—it was not in human nature (hear, hear). And if England insisted on having a finger in Irish affairs it was to minister to her own interests at the expense of Ireland (cheers). Thus was he not right in attributing the miseries of this country to her union with England? (Cheers.) What had been the result of that union? They saw their plentiful harvests, far more than sufficient to supply the wants of her people, swept out of the land, and the golden grain, the produce of their own fertile soil, supplied by a miserable and insufficient supply of grain of a description used only for pigs (hear, hear). The golden treasure of their fields was taken, and in its place a dole of pig's meal was supplied them, and not enough even of that (hear, hear). Political economists might endeavour to prove that this was the people's good, but he, for one, would not believe them (cheers). If a juggler put a loaf of bread under his hat, and in the display of his art placed his hands behind his back to show he did not interfere, and if when on lifting the hat nothing was found beneath it but a mouse or a sparrow (laughter)—though the juggler looked ever so innocent with his hands behind his back, he (Fr. Kenyon) would say candidly he would not believe but that the juggler (by whatever juggling trick he did it) had

taken away the bread (laughter and cheers). And thus it was long, long before the potato blight made its appearance, Ireland had been robbed and plundered, and that plunder—that robbery—could be laid to the door of no nation in Europe save one—England (cheers and hisses). There then was another proof that England had reduced Ireland to misery, and that true patriotism consisted in the endeavour to shake off that plundering dominion (hear, hear, and cheers). Now, how were they to struggle to shake off this dominion? (Hear, hear.) Did they think that England would help them to do it? No; she never would until they had the strength to enforce her (hear, hear). Did they imagine that she would be content to give up the annual plunder she was receiving from this country? or abandon the hope of future plunder? He would tell them she never would (hear, hear). The English Government would never let go the grip she held as long as she could. It was as idle for them to believe it as any other moral impossibility in nature (hear, hear). It was against experience and history. An individual may do this, but corporations have never done it. Nations could never do it, for it was not human nature. England never would give up that tribute as long as she could hold it. Therefore, the determination to struggle for the Repeal implied that they should wrest it from the power of England (cheers). But how could this be done? Did they think it an easy matter? No such thing. He would ask was it to be done by a man saying “I am a Repealer”? (Laughter, and cries of no.) Why, if that be all, they might as well say “I am an

immaterialist.” What matter what a man said he was. He could say “I am a Repealer.” It was but three words. What faith was to be put in these three words? What did the minister care for the man repeating them. If a man said “I am a Repealer,” and at the same time keeps besieging the door of the Minister, dines with him three times a week, and continues to beg for a place in the Excise for this person and in the Customs for that, he (Fr. Kenyon) did not think such a man would Repeal the Union (loud cheers). No, he could as soon drag the sun from the heavens. Repeal was to be won by the exertion of moral force properly understood (cheering)—by an undying hatred of English dominion, and, in their official capacity, by a hatred as intense of the executors and administrators of that dominion (cheers). If they cherished that holy hatred—if they taught it to their children—if they acted on it—then they might entertain hopes of Repealing the Union. He wished to add a few words more to show that it was not the mere talk about Repeal—a man calling himself a Repealer—that would do if he were not a Repealer. It might have happened, he admitted, in the olden time, in ancient years, when words had a meaning—a specific meaning—and when men were true, and could be depended upon, that professions of faith in Repeal would imply all that determination in which, and in which alone, he could recognise the slightest possibility of attaining what they had in view (cheers). But in these degenerate days, when words came to have no meaning—when men could say anything for a purpose, and unsay it again without a

blush—what mattered it that a man called himself a Repealer? (Cheers.) Many of those who called themselves moral force-balmy-Conciliation-Hall Repealers, he believed in his heart were the worst anti-Repealers in the country—were greater obstacles to the cause than any minion of English power, because they knew the one, and could meet him; but they could never get on whilst they had false lights deluding the people, and pretending to guide them to that which they never could, never would, and never meant to guide them to (cheers).

Therefore, again he repeated he would have no regard for the mere profession of Repeal (hear, hear). He had penned down a few words in common use amongst these men, and had considered the meanings formerly attached to them with their recognised meanings at the present. First, there was “nailing the colours to the mast.” In unsophisticated eyes that phrase meant a determination to stand by any cause in which men embarked (hear, hear). Now it meant a half-starved cur with his tail between his legs running away from the light with a mouthful of kitchen stuff (laughter and cheers). Now, he would give his definition of “moral force”—one which he had derived from a consideration of events occurring under his own observation—and he would have it borne in mind that he was not uttering these sentiments in any feeling of levity—he was convinced he was giving the true meaning of the phrase—perhaps it would be better to say the true no-meaning—or, better still, the true perversion of meaning. “Moral force,” as at present used and employed by trading

patriots, was a figure of speech—a metaphor signifying that a man may have his eye knocked out, his legs cut off, or any other conceivable surgical operation performed on his body without the shedding of one single drop of human blood (cheers and laughter). “No compromise”—when first employed had a most determined and absolute meaning—it signified that for all time, and in all circumstances, there should be no abatement of the fair demands made or the claims urged. But now it had received a most strange contortion in significance. Within certain limits—that was to say, at this side of three or four hundred years, it had the same meaning still; but no sooner were those limits reached, or even approached, than, strange to say, it meant “every compromise.”

In that manner nearly all the words in the English language were employed by trading patriots. With respect to place-begging, he did not think that would be given up. True, there were many honest Repealers who sincerely advocated place-begging. They said that it was a hardship that in this Irish land Englishmen, Scotchmen, and Welshmen should hold the places of trust and emolument from which Irishmen, equally well qualified, were excluded; and they could not understand how it could be wrong for a member of Parliament, when a place became vacant, to recommend that an Irishman should be appointed to it. But he thought he understood the question, and in this way he would solve it. He admitted that it was a grievance and an evil that men from other countries should fill the situations in this country to the exclusion of

Irishmen, who, though perhaps themselves starving, saw the resources of the country thus lavished upon strangers. That was, no doubt, a grievance and an evil, but how was it to be remedied? If they went lurking about the doors of the minions of England, begging the crumbs that fell from their tables, they would never acquire their rights (hear). Therefore, it would be better to submit to the evil for a time, no matter how great or oppressive the grievance or the injury, that they might be in a position to abolish it for ever (cheers), than endeavour to remedy it for a moment and entail the lasting necessity of begging from their masters (cheers). For never could they obtain a full or permanent remedy by begging. Every English Government that usurped or exercised dominion in the land would grant some paltry places to Irishmen, but would give all that was worth having to their own people, still deluding and mocking the people of this country with vain and false hopes, like Dead Sea fruits, that tempt the eye but turn to ashes on the lips (cheers). In this way would England ever keep them grovelling at her feet, while she enjoyed their degradation, and enjoyed also the profit derived from it.

Therefore, they should not be deluded by an apparent show of reason. All was not gold that glistened. They should look through the flimsy argument advanced in favour of place-begging, and they would find that the policy of the Confederation relative to it was based on truth. The more the light of reason was brought to bear on that principle the more clearly would appear the bare-faced

sophisms and delusions with which men dared to insult their understandings. Let the question be examined, and the mercenary, corrupt, and selfish principle of place-begging would be exposed in all its hideous deformity (cheers). He repeated it would be infinitely better to bear with the evil complained of for a while than that they might all be independent enough to labour efficiently for that which would remove it for ever. The principle of the Confederation had not as yet been acknowledged as generally throughout the land as the true friends of Ireland could desire; but the resolution stated sufficient to show that the principle was progressing—they knew that its truth and honesty were gaining adherents every day—and that it would ultimately, and he trusted at no distant day, prevail everywhere. But if not a single constituency sanctioned that principle, still the Confederation would never swerve from it, or doubt of its ultimate success. For why should they not have faith in their own principles? Why should they doubt of their power to effect the good they were capable of producing? He, for one, had faith in them; he was confident they were based on truth, and the truth, he knew, would at length prevail to the discomfiture of error, imposture and deceit (cheers). Taking the weakness of human nature into account, it was consoling to know that the principle had been acknowledged even to the extent it had; and, with all the opposition it would doubtless continue to receive from those who did not feel the degradation of begging at the door of England, it would not be the fault of the Confederation if the people were not

thoroughly convinced of its injurious and corrupting nature (cheers). In his judgment, the single election in Limerick, taken alone, was to a reflective mind of more value and worth, as an indication of the sincerity of the popular feeling, and as pregnant with more of hope and trust in the virtue of the country than all the other elections put together (cheers).

The reverend gentleman then went on to allude to the Dungarvan election, strongly condemning the mismanagement and delays which had taken place in preparing for it. They wanted determined Repealers who would do their duty if all the rest of Ireland were asleep. Everything besides was claptrap, humbug and jugglery (cheers). Some persons thought in Limerick that Mr. O'Brien was a little too punctilious with regard to the late election, but they felt that if that was a fault it was a fault at the right side, particularly in these days of brazen presumption (cheers). The poor were in earnest; they thought they were standing up for their religion in the course they pursued at Limerick, because a foul report was spread that those who acted with Mr. O'Brien did not believe in the Christian religion. Now, he (Rev. Fr. Kenyon) thought it right to state in connection with the late election that Mr. O'Brien received in Limerick an address most respectably signed, to which the Bishop of his own Diocese gave a distinct and separate mark of approbation (loud cheers). Did they think that their prelate would give that testimony to a man whom he believed to be leagued with others for the subversion of Christianity? Furthermore,



he would state that if some of the clergy had not put their names to that document it was because they were of opinion that by so doing they would be opposing the Repeal Association, though they admitted with him that the Association had a thousand blemishes; they thought it was their duty, nevertheless, rather to amend than to destroy it.

It was his opinion that that Association would grow from bad to worse until it became such an abomination that it should be banished in some way or other. He thought that the highest honour was due to the brave men of Limerick, and to those Conservatives who, though some of them did not think there was a necessity for Repeal, supported it in the person of Mr. O'Brien (cheers). That was true conciliation; it was what Conciliation Hall had been for ever prating about, but had never effected (hear, hear). If more men like Mr. Monsell were returned he should not regret it; and if some priests voted for Conservatives it was for want of confidence in the true, balmy O'Connellite Repealers (hear and laughter). He would advise the people not to be led unthinkingly by the opinion of anyone—by priest, bishop or layman. When a priest took part in politics he did so not as a priest, but as a politician; and they should not mind the cant of Conciliation Hall, which was—"It was a priest said it; it ought to be respected." A priest was to be respected when he told the truth (cheers). In conclusion, he would call upon the country to labour without cessation in the cause of Repeal, and when it could give such evidence of honesty, perseverance and enthusiasm as had been afforded at Limerick

they would witness the restoration of their national independence. After some further remarks the reverend gentleman sat down amid loud and long-continued cheering.

This speech was reported as above in the "Freeman's Journal." The Editor of that paper was severely reprimanded in "Conciliation Hall" for allowing this report to appear. He apologised for his lack of vigilance, and stated that the speech was very much curtailed—that it would, if given verbatim, have run to several columns.

## CHAPTER XII.

### FATHER KENYON'S POLICY AND INFLUENCE (1847 AND 1848).

With Mitchel's avowed policy, at the beginning of the eventful year 1848, Father Kenyon frankly concurred. Not only had they a common ideal and objective, but agreed as to the minutiae of plan and project. Both thought that a revolution depends on spiritual impetus, not on material force; that it springs into being spontaneously; that with it, meteorlike, come arms, resources, equipment, leaders. "A soul, and not a programme, is the one thing needful for our freedom," wrote Father Kenyon before the crisis. "The earth is awakening from sleep: a flash of electric fire is passing through the dumb millions. Democracy is girding itself once more, like a strong man to run a race; and slumbering nations are arising in their might." So said Mitchel, and prayed, as only saints or martyrs, or saviours of peoples, pray, that the "flash of electric fire" would come when the moment for action came.

Sharply distinct from this is Fintan Lalor's dicta, pronounced at this time: "One thing at a time, one thing alone until it be finished." "I want a prepared, organised, and resistless revolution." Like Tone, and unlike Mitchel and his friend Father Kenyon, Lalor believed that organisation was the first essential to success. Wolfe Tone's great watchwords

were "Unity," "Preparedness." Eight years of steady endeavour passed between the commencement of his national work and its tragic end in November, 1798. By steadily striving to unite and organise the Catholic democracy, by combining their scattered numbers into a centralised national association, he awoke in North and South, East and West, a common sentiment of brotherhood and patriotism.

"Unity of classes"—co-operation between members of all sections of society—was Mitchel's chief desideratum. His "Letters to the Farmers of the North of Ireland" cleared the air of much ignorant intolerance and provincialism; and the chief influence wrought by his paper, the *United Irishman*, was reconciliation between creeds and classes. "To substitute the common name of Irishman in place of the denomination Protestant, Catholic, and Dissenter," seemed to him a work worthy of one who recognised the duty he owed his country. It is not too much to assert that, given one year more, Mitchel would have uprooted for ever the religious intolerance which the enemies of Irish Nationality are zealous in fostering, and which down to the present day is used as a wedge between one province of Ireland and the remaining three. At the precise moment when Mitchel's propaganda was making its mark "the Clutching Hand" swooped; and the might of mind which had made this man stronger than armed battalions was removed from its sphere of usefulness.

Father Kenyon, in complete agreement with Mitchel's ideal of unity, was even louder in his de-

mand for public honesty and sincerity. Against cant and hypocrisy, place-hunting and corruption, he fought hard and tirelessly. "*Foreign sway and native humbug*" were, in his regard, the two crying evils. On them he concentrated his attack, and bent himself sternly to the task of uprooting them. That John Mitchel had adopted the surest means to sweep them away, he admits in his first letter to the *United Irishman*. With Mitchel he saw eye to eye. The plans projected by other members of the Confederation at this time, he could not whole-heartedly support. To mark the ultimate ends towards which his policy was directed, and to assign him a definite place in the movement, it is only necessary to examine this letter, which appeared in the first number of Mitchel's paper. Passive resistance to all foreign laws detrimental to the nation's well-being; the arming of the people, "after the manner of all freemen, and of all men aspiring to be free," were two of the points on which he laid particular stress.

"The real Nationalists of Ireland—the Separatists—have always been men of broad human sympathy and intense democracy," wrote James Connolly; and past as well as contemporary history verify his words. In the days of the Irish Confederation the true spirit of democracy was scarcely understood. Frequent proposals were made for "winning over the gentry," for forming an "Irish aristocracy," and even on the Council of the Confederation were men who carefully observed class predilections; and this at moments fraught with immense consequences. Father Kenyon was one of the people, by birth, heredity, and environment: with

them he took his stand. From first to last he emphasised his belief in the people, in their integrity, in their fidelity, in their loyalty to their country. At times he would harangue them, sternly rebuking them for the existence of the very miseries of which he was striving to remove the source. Though he did not believe that popular judgment and discretion were always to be blindly followed, he did rely on, and put his trust in, *the right instinct* of the people. On one occasion, when replying to a toast: "*The People, the Source of all Legitimate Power*," he spoke the following significant words: "When God delegated power, He did not delegate it to the privileged few; nor should they be duped any longer with the belief that because a man is decked out in gaudy robes, because he flaunted a feather or wore a star, that he was better than another man, or that he was entitled to honour or distinctions not paid to others far superior to him intellectually and physically." He would endorse the opinion expressed by Connolly, that the working class form a nation's strength—its bone and sinew, and actuating brain-force. He would agree with Patrick Pearse in his loving trust in "the simple, faithful common people." "The middle class, whether tradesmen or shopkeepers," Father Kenyon regarded as "the worth and hope of Ireland." At a time when snobbery and place-begging were corrupting large sections of the people, and simple-minded patriotism rare amongst them, he said:—

*"They will yet come round. They shall. And when they do, the sacrifices they have hitherto made in the dark only to advance the interests of a few heartless schemers will merely*

*have foreshadowed those sterner trials which, with a clearer insight and a nearer aim, they shall endure and surmount for the disenthralment of their native soil, and of their children's children."*

Fintan Lalor—who on many occasions was bracketed with Father Kenyon, the two holding strong individual views distinct from the main body of the Confederation,—centred his hopes in the tenant farmers. An independent peasantry, tillers *and* owners of the soil, he regarded as the basis of an independent Irish Nation. For him the success of the revolution depended largely, if not wholly, on the support of "the grey-coats." John Mitchel, of loftier genius, was more idealistic—ambitioning a union of all sects and classes, hoping until the last to draw the ascendancy party of landlords into the Confederate ranks. Duffy, too, was deluded, until the eleventh hour, by a like chimera, failing to appreciate this so-called Irish aristocracy as the planted pillars of a foreign Empire.

Father Kenyon and Lalor were alike in this: that they built their hopes for the nation on the allegiance of the masses of the people, whether tenant farmers or tradesmen. One a city-man, the other a rustic, they had each a first-hand knowledge of the raw material which they would fashion into a prosperous community of freemen. But Lalor, as an economic teacher, is in advance of Father Kenyon, as he is immeasurably in advance of all the thinkers of his generation. To one unacquainted with Lalor's writings, the following words of List may seem original: "Only in the soil of national prosperity does the national spirit strike its roots, produce fine

blossoms and rich fruits, and only from the unity of material interests does mental power arise, and again from both of them national power." Lalor's intense mind flashed forth many ideas that have since germinated, and changed the whole nature and scope of political economy.

Lalor, Mitchel, Duffy—like their distinguished leader, Davis,—asserted themselves and propagated their doctrines by copious writings. Father Kenyon's written words are comparatively few. His strongest influence was a personal one. At the various popular gatherings, on the hustings of more than one election, in the meetings of the Council of the Confederation, his words always carried weight.\* He seemed to tower over his associates spiritually, as in actual fact he towered over them physically. Add to this the charm he possessed for those who knew him intimately, and his dominant personal influence may be gauged. Duffy records the fact that "Father Kenyon exercised decisive authority in critical cases." When, after Mitchel's arrest, the Council was reconstructed, and a new personalia voted in, Father Kenyon, with T. F. Meagher, headed the list, each receiving thirty votes.

He was not merely popular: his every word was a

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\* The reports extant of the priest's speeches are anything but satisfactory or complete. A notable example of this is his speech from the chair at the meeting held in Clohonan before Smith O'Brien, Meagher, and Mitchel visited the locality in 1848; another incomplete version is that of the address at Borrisokane about the same time. Many of these speeches have been more carefully preserved in the memories of old inhabitants of Tipperary County.



force. Many references are made by those who record the events of that era to the "extraordinary influence" exercised by Father Kenyon. That this influence depended mainly on his spoken words may be concluded from allusions to the "brilliant talks—spoken essays, almost,"—which the priest's numerous friends loved to recall. "No matter what the subject on which he chanced to speak," wrote John Martin, "it was beautiful to see how he began at a right beginning and went easily and rapidly on as he widened the scope of his exposition, embracing everything needed for his purpose, answering all objections as he went on, taking indisputable possession of the whole field. And there was not a word too many or too few. There was not a word that was not the proper word. His brain clearly saw the whole subject, and every word came without effort exactly in its right place. Could he *write* so faultlessly as he can speak!" \*

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\* Letter to Mrs. Mitchel, 20th June, 1868.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE STRUGGLE.

Charles Gavan Duffy, in "Four Years of Irish History," mentions the "defection" of Father Kenyon from the national cause. He chronicles the prominent part taken by the priest up to and immediately following Mitchel's arrest, and represents him as having suddenly retired to the seclusion of Templeberry when the hour for active measures had come. This historian criticises severely the conduct of Father Kenyon, and leaves his reader doubtful as to whether Mitchel's friend acted in the emergency as behoves a man of honour to act. When all the facts are re-considered the truth emerges clearly from a miasma of doubt: the truth that Father Kenyon acted, not only as a man of honour, but with superb courage and true nobility.

Father Kenyon was in Dublin\* during the trial of John Mitchel, and was one of those present in the Court in Green Street who joined the passionate chorus in reply to Mitchel's "Can I not promise for one, for two, for three?"

On the morning after Mitchel's removal from Dublin he went to the homes of the chief Con-

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\* In a letter to the *Freeman* Father Kenyon relates, in his own incomparable way, his experiences at this time on endeavouring to obtain an interview with Mitchel in Newgate. (For text of this letter, see Appendix.)

federates and urged them to bestir themselves, to resist the wave of despondency that overcame them on the seizure of their leader, to arise and promulgate his policy determinedly and actively. He it was who then launched the project of an Executive Committee, and of the reconstruction of the Council. And he was one of those who advised the sending of Confederate agents to America and Paris. At the moment the existing Council was divided into two sections: one comprising the cautious *gentlemen* such as Dillon and Duffy—the other the plain and (perhaps) rash men of action—Devin Reilly, John Martin, and Father Kenyon.

At this time Father Kenyon was under a rebuke from his Bishop for inculcating revolutionary doctrines. At a meeting in Templeberry on the 12th of the previous month he had incurred the Episcopal displeasure by using language “incendiary” in tone. At the same meeting Father Birmingham, P.P., of Borrisokane, spoke and advised the people to arm quietly, but to refrain from action until their liberties were invaded; and then that the rising should extend over the whole country, not over a county or two. This priest contributed an able article to the *United Irishman* on the Catholic doctrine of Resistance. The young priests throughout the country were at this time all “rebels,”\* the older priests and the prelates were still adherents of O’Connell.

On the return of Father Kenyon from Dublin he received an ultimatum from Dr. Kennedy which con-

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\* See letter from Rev. P. Byrne (Appendix).

fronted him with a choice between total suspension and resignation of leadership in the coming rising. At the public meeting referred to Father Kenyon had pledged himself and the meeting for whom he was spokesman to support the Confederates—to advance and support their cause “until our struggle shall have issued in victory, we here deliberately, in the face of heaven, devote our lives and fortunes.” When speaking these solemn words he did not foresee that he should himself be called upon to sacrifice something far more sacred than life and fortune. The choice meant a terrible conflict—a denial of self, a supreme immolation of will.

“I can only pray God to guide you and all of us out of our present straits,” he wrote to the Confederates, whom he called brothers, and with whom he was one in heart and spirit—in every pulse of his heart, in every breath of his spirit.

We shall not dwell on his struggle and suffering: the choice was forced upon him—his moral courage put to the test. From this time forth the hearty, buoyant, responsive part of his nature—the part that Mitchel loved was buried; the sunny enthusiasm which englamoured the pen of “N.N.” was overshadowed forever.

The compact made with his Bishop—the observance of which was a *conditio sine qua non* for the retention of his parish—amounted to an undertaking that he should take no *leading* part in the rising; but the priest made a reservation which gave him the right to take his place *in the ranks*, once there was “an armed force in the field.” The armed force, as we know, never materialised, for the secret

agents of the foreign Government were too well posted as to the trend of events. The Clubs were forced to take action on the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act—three months before the time appointed, whilst their real leaders were in a convict hulk and prison cells,—a small but gallant effort, never to be called a failure, “for their attempt was not a failure, but a triumph for that deathless thing we call Irish Nationality.” Luby asserts that, had the compact with his ecclesiastical director not existed, Father Kenyon would have led his people into the fray. The Templederry Confederate Club, of which he was president, was one of the strongest, numerically, and best organised in the country. Had Father Kenyon been free to act, had he led these men into the struggle and died with them, which would be the poorer, the Irish Nation or the elephant who “crushes like half-starved rats” everything that crosses its Imperial path, provided it be of lesser strength?

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The following is Father Kenyon’s letter in denial of the report that he had retired from public life—a report circulated by the Castle Press:—

To the Editor of the *Limerick Reporter*.

Thomondgate, June 16th, 1848.

Dear Sir,—In the last number of the *Limerick Chronicle* it is reported that I am understood to have retired from political strife. If this report was true, it would, I admit, be of very trifling importance; yet it may be just worth the trouble of contradicting. I have *not* retired from political strife, and I believe that no honest Irishman who is master

of his own actions should retire from it till his country is delivered from her plagues. The plagues of Ireland, furthermore, I believe to consist principally in two calamities—her subjection to a cruel and greedy government of foreigners, and the prevalence within her own borders of a system of trickery and treachery, of tyranny and tergiversation unexampled in all past history, and known at present throughout the world as balmy O'Connellism. These twin monsters I shall continue to combat with all the weapons and appliances of legitimate warfare, until they are finally exterminated. Provided always that this utter extermination can be accomplished within six or eight calendar months from this date; or, at least, that it shall appear within that period to be in a process of completion, as palpable as the present ruin of our national resources. But if at the expiration of those critical months foreign sway and native humbug shall continue to flourish on this devoted soil; if English law and Indian meal and fever-sheds remain to us in lieu of human food, decent habitations, and national freedom; if dignitaries of the Church blow hot and cold within a space of three days (like the Bishop of Meath) as a matter of course, and after the fashion of the country, without exciting the least surprise in anyone; and if independent national journals (like the *Freeman*) deliberately declare that the whole thing is settled according as such dignitaries blow; if project still succeeds to project, like the everlasting motion of the tide; if dreams are still marketable, and the cant of union continue to be as highly prized as the possession of virtue; and, above all, if John O'Connell be still encouraged, by a weekly stipend and letters from the highest quarters, to rattle his father's bones for our amusement, if we go on renewing his bills upon our gullibility and lend him our ears as often and as long as he may need them, then I, for my part, will abandon politics and occupy my future leisure in cynical writings and amassing coins.

I am, dear Sir,

Very faithfully yours,

JOHN KENYON, V.P.,

Templderry.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### SPEECHES ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS.

At the meeting in Templeberry on Sunday, April 16th, 1848, the Rev. Father Kenyon was called to the Chair amid loud cheers.

The Chairman said:

We have not met here to-day for the purpose of shouting, or cheering, or for idle talking; but I will tell you for what we have come here. Let there be no interruption. I have been appointed Chairman to this very respectable meeting. I call it very respectable, and I will call it so again, emphatically; for, consisting as it does of the inhabitants of an extensive tract of country, it is a meeting assembled together, not by any manoeuvre—not by any advertising—but assembled, as it were, unanimously together by that instinct natural to humanity, which prompts it to seek a means of rescuing itself from a degraded bondage. In the first place, I believe the principal object of the meeting is to appoint a delegate to represent this district in the Council of Three Hundred Irishmen (cheers), who shall be Irishmen, and not Irishwomen (loud cheers). We have further met to pledge our support to John Mitchel, a Presbyterian from the North; Thomas Francis Meagher, a Catholic from Waterford; and William Smith O'Brien, a member of the Established Church. The Government has attempted to put them down. But these brave men

are determined to oppose the Government, to fight the Government—yes, and to conquer the Government (vehement cheers).

A Voice: We will all fight with them, too.

Listen to me again. You have often met before in crowds like this; you have been hitherto accustomed to shout, and cheer, and take off your hats, until shouting and cheering and taking off your hats has come to be worth not a pinch of snuff. I want to know if this manifestation is like to the shouting and taking off your hats which you have been in the habit of for the time past? (Cries or no, no, and cheers). Is it not? Well, I am glad of it. I ask you again: Are you ready to die for Ireland?

Several Voices: Yes, yes; ready to die this minute.

Do you fear—you starved and whipped and lashed wretches—do you fear death? (Loud cries of no, no, and cheers). Well, then, will you listen to me? I tell you, my countrymen, that if things go on as they have, and are, going on, another million of you will have died of starvation within the year. You have, if I understand you rightly, you have zealously resolved upon this day to stand by and to support John Mitchel, Thomas Francis Meagher, and William Smith O'Brien, in any way or anywhere Government may render it necessary for them to require your services. (Cries of: We will; we'll die for them). True patriotism is easily distinguished—it faces scorn, contumely, persecution, and death. It is very easy for a man to be a carpet patriot—very easy to fill your ears with high-sounding words of no significance. A patriot of that stamp



may agitate for years without effecting a farthing's worth of good (hear, hear). Temptation and trial, persecution and adversity, prove sincerity of patriotism more than a century of moral-force speech-making, of peace-preaching, and humbug. That is not the kind of patriotism that immortalised the men of old (cheers). Not by moral force was it that Athens or Sparta, or even Rome, achieved liberty and built up goodly monuments that perpetuate their noble deeds through all time. In all these great and famous Republics the men who raised them valued not their lives when their country needed the sacrifice. And he who held aloof was disgraced in the eyes of his countrymen; he could not speak in a public assembly; he could not stand candidate for, nor was he deemed fit to occupy, any public office—he was, in fact, held in abomination by all classes of men, and scorned as a person whose presence was pestilential. (Cheers, and cries of: We shall never do so). Every man ought to stir himself up with these reflections—every man ought to gird himself up for the struggle, ought to rush against and conquer that Government that is lying like a load of lead on the heart of his country, weighing her down to the dust, and destroying her best energies. Again, I repeat he ought to conquer that Government or die. That should be the first and primary resolve you should fix upon.

In the second place, it is meet that you should prepare for that majestic struggle, which may come soon, as well as you can. The Council of the Confederation advises all Irishmen to act prudently but determinedly. It advises no person to act im-

prudently or expose himself needlessly and uselessly to the harpies of the law. But prepare yourselves.

If arms are wanting in any other part of Ireland, they are more wanted here, if we could have them. The present enactment prevents us from possessing them avowedly; but I tell you openly to be ready from day to day—to watch every opportunity, to face every obstacle, and when the moment comes we shall be found with arms in our hands—we shall not be unprepared, and then every man must arise and do battle bravely. Resolutions will be proposed to you, which I must say are not meant to be idle chattering; nor do I think they are emanating from men who could, with dog-like subserviency, lick the hands that smote them, nor meanly submit to tyrannical power. They are not meant to be henceforward forgotten, but to be taken home with you, and to be acted upon as far as circumstances will admit. These resolutions having been put from the Chair, any man who has a member to propose to represent the united parishes in the National Council of Three Hundred may do so, as far as two members.

On the same occasion the reverend Chairman drew up the following Address, the adoption of which was proposed by John D. O’Ryan, Esq.:—

*ADDRESS:*

To John Mitchel, Thomas Francis Meagher, and  
William Smith O’Brien, Esqrs.

Patriot Brothers,—We, the United Irish Re-

pealers of the Parishes of Templederry, Glankeen, Lattera, Annameadle, Killeneave, Dolla, Upperchurch, Kilmore, Ballinaclough, Templebeg, Ballymackey, Nenagh, Lisboney, Drum, Inch, Holycross, Thurles, Kiloscully, and Templemore, assembled in public meeting at the Templederry Wall on this 16th day of April, 1848, take leave to congratulate you on the proud position which you have taken in the front of our National Struggle.

To sustain you in that position—to aid you in advancing it steadily and speedily, until our struggle shall have issued in victory,—we here, deliberately, in the face of Heaven, devote our lives and fortunes.

If we fail to execute this sacred engagement, whenever and howsoever you require its fulfilment, may every trace of manhood wither out of our sons, and beggary and slavery flourish in our land forever!

Against hostile menacings we dare not to encourage you, for we know you to be superior to ignoble fear; but against the despondency which an apprehension of our unworthiness or apathy, for whom you are resolved to toil and risk so much, may create in your otherwise trustful hearts, we do humbly hope to strengthen you by this solemn assurance that, although dastards calling themselves Irishmen may be found to desert or betray you, even now there are men yet in Ireland, multitudes of men—and we aspire to be of them—who prize life at present only as it may serve you to redeem their country.

Onward, then, brave spirits! whither fame and freedom beckon you. Onward, and we follow as fast

and as far as God may enable us. Onward together, brothers all—Catholic, Protestant, and Presbyterian! May it prove a happy omen! Stand we up together for the dear old land; or fall we, if we are yet again to fall, still together, fighting manfully like the valiant Maccabees, for our “city, country, and citizens!”

(Signed on behalf of the Meeting),

JOHN KENYON, Chairman.

#### THE BROTHERS McCORMACK.

On the 11th May, 1858, William and Daniel McCormack were executed for the murder of a steward named Ellis. Though they were innocent of the crime, though only the most glaringly unreliable evidence could be manufactured to convict them, they were found guilty, and the capital sentence pronounced. Ellis was an infamous character, well-known for unjust dealings, evictions, and shameful crimes. The McCormack boys, on the other hand, were two typical Tipperarymen—honest, hard-working, fearless. They were held in very high esteem by neighbours and clergy, and no one gave the slightest credence to the charge brought against them. When one learns that the notorious Keogh was on the bench at their trial, one ceases to wonder at the callous travesty of justice which condemned them, guiltless, to the scaffold.

One of the brothers said, on hearing the sentence:

“Death is most welcome. We are as innocent as the child unborn. We did not go outside the door that night.” The other said: “We are dying innocent. We had neither hand, act, nor part in the murder of Ellis.” On the day on which the crime of their execution took place the town of Nenagh wore an appearance of mourning, all shops being shuttered and business suspended.

A public meeting was held to petition a reprieve of the sentence—but in vain. At this meeting Father Kenyon was the principal speaker.

#### SPEECH OF FATHER KENYON ON JUDGE KEOGH AND THE McCORMACKS.

“The first feeling which I experience at finding myself one of a meeting of Tipperarymen, assembled to petition the British Parliament for a judgment of justice in a flagrant case of injustice, is one of shame. I am indignant with myself: I thought I could never descend so low. Time was in Ireland when the priests in Ireland—aye, and the Bishops, too,—would scorn to petition the British Parliament. I am here to tell you not to put faith in Parliament, or in petitions. They would give justice to their own people, but you are a people foreign to them; they have their heels upon your necks, and their hands in your pockets; and they have no notion of recognising you as equals or of dispensing to you impartial justice. I will even demean myself as much for the little fragment of justice we now seek.

because we may possibly obtain it; but I would not deceive them by letting them imagine that I believe that any real or substantial justice can be obtained by that means. Justice is a thing for which the soul of man thirsts; all men love justice, and Irishmen pre-eminently love it. On the broad face of the earth there stands or sits nothing so noble, or approaching more closely to the likeness of the Divine Creator of the world, than the righteous judge, fairly and impartially administering justice. But as man with a soul capable of soaring beyond the skies, a soul working, living, and acting within himself, is the highest type on the earth of God, what, on the other hand, is the lowest of creation? Is it the ape or the monkey? Those animals make man ashamed of a caricature of himself; and as those creatures are the lowest, and the worst, so is an unjust judge, under the guise of justice, disappointing the human soul, and administering to it the poison of injustice, the vilest of creation; and a monstrous caricature upon that high ideal, that glorious early type of divinity, a just judge impartially giving even justice to all without exception. Such an unjust judge, and such a vile man is this Keogh, a man who, for his deadly treason to his country, if justice was delivered to him—not the caricature of justice he dispenses in yonder courthouse—would years since have been hung on a gallows fifty feet high. He is one of those who trade on the credulity of the men of Ireland. We have been too long dupes; and he is one who, pretending to be our friend, stabbed us to the heart. We should petition Parliament to hang him. We

have the liberty to petition, and let us petition to have Keogh hung.

It is not for nothing at this time of day Tipperary has assembled. It is a practice of religious houses that at the end of every seven years the members meet together to renew their baptismal vows. It is fifteen years since we have renewed our baptismal vows of patriotism in Tipperary, since O'Connell's meeting at Grange,\* and it is time to renew them. During the dreary years which have passed over us since delusions have come across us and faint-heartedness. We have lost trust in truth, and in ourselves; we have drifted along, helpless and hopeless, whither sorrow, the waves and the winds drove us; and yet what was true for us then is true for us still.

Truth never dies, though it may grow old. We may despond and despair, but what was true fifteen years ago is true this day, that we have no hope but in ourselves. We have come here to-day in spite of all falsehoods uttered; in spite of Viceroy's that have come since to delude us; in spite of all the flunkeys of all the towns in Ireland, who pretended to think Ireland was prosperous, to tell the world that there is an undying sentiment in our

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\* On the 25th May, 1843, O'Connell held a mass meeting on the Hill of Grange, near Nenagh. The Liberator, then at the zenith of his fame, was on the occasion of this visit received with the utmost enthusiasm by the entire manhood of County Tipperary.

A banquet was given in his honour at the Music Hall, Nenagh, at which Father Kenyon was present. He spoke in reply to the toast of "Father Mathew."

hearts that assures us that all this is false, that we are not prosperous; for what is prosperity if we cannot be free? Therefore, let it be known to England and her Parliament that no matter what the Derry flunkeys, the Dublin flunkeys, the Cork flunkeys, the Limerick flunkeys may say, the men of Tipperary *know* they are not well off while those who live in Ireland belong to others. What is a man if he feels that he belongs to another? What is prosperity to him? We, being born into the world are born patriots; patriotism is the heritage that comes to us through seven centuries; that comes to us from our plundered, murdered sires. We never can consent to sink down to the condition of the negro slave, who feels not his degradation. We feel our degradation; and when we do, no one should despair of us.

“If we do but watch the hour,  
There never yet was human power  
That could escape if unforgiven  
The patient watch and vigil long  
Of him who treasures up a wrong.”

Let us treasure up our wrongs, and let no one tear them from us, until God inspires us with the power, and opens to us a way to right them. We have come here to renew our devotion to our country; to pledge ourselves to our tranquil country. We will not be deluded, but understand the true position in spite of all flunkeydom. Am I going to tell you the means of showing your devotion? Alas, no! You are sheep without a shepherd; you have not the Moses to deliver you. During the last fifteen years



another vice has grown up amongst us: religious intolerance; very different from the time when it was O'Connell's aim and boast that he had reconciled all sects; very different feelings have grown up; religious discord has been forced in amongst us, and produced, as usual, bitter fruits. We are assembled here to state that we are not bigots; that we open our hearts and arms to our countrymen of every religious profession. If we have returned The O'Donoghue it is not because he is a Catholic, but because he is The O'Donoghue. We will set our faces against religious bigotry. Let us exclude from ourselves this great temptation and danger. Let us do that and pray to God and wait with patience and fortitude. By this a greater object will be obtained than by petitioning Parliament. Let us on this one occasion condescend to petition Parliament—God send us for the last time. Tipperary petitions Parliament to take the case of those peasant brothers into consideration, and to hang the unworthy judge, and thereby enable us to live a little longer in some kind of peace, and prevent us from thinking that we have nothing to hope for. If our prayer is granted, let us remember that it is an infinitesimally small instalment of justice. I hope that you endorse my sentiments, and I will now bid you a good evening."

## CHAPTER XV.

### FATHER KENYON'S FRIENDS.

“You would have greatly liked Father Kenyon; and I was very sorry you were not in town. He promises to spend a week in Dublin in the course of the summer, when you must be advised of it, and come up to meet him. Do you know that you have very little idea of the man from his writings? He is a calm, gentle, good-natured, and jovial fellow—is occasionally wild and childish in his glee, sings a great deal, badly indeed, but heartily and with right good will. And then, in serious conversation I think him the very wisest man I ever met. He and Mr. Haughton met several times, argued philanthropy together, and parted with increased respect for one another. In short, I reckon Kenyon the finest fellow, lay or cleric, that I ever knew.”

Thus wrote John Mitchel in the spring of '47 in a letter to John Martin, of Loughorne. The friendship between Mitchel and Father Kenyon, begun in the early days of the *Nation*, was destined to ripen with the years and outlive many trials, stresses, and vicissitudes. These words give the early impression made by the priest on the clear, penetrative mind of the Ulster patriot. The genial personality, the vigorous intellect, the logical grasp of facts possessed by the “man from the South” discovered kindred faculties in the varied and many-



“THE THREE JOHNS”

REV. JOHN KENYON—JOHN MITCHELL—JOHN MARTIN

From the original in the possession of Francis Joseph Bigger, of Belfast



sided individuality of the great patriot. Here the similarity between them ends. A myriad subtle differences of instinct and character distinguished each; but a myriad subtler and stronger influences knit them mind to mind, soul to soul.

During Mitchel's exile Father Kenyon visited him three times. Their first meeting after their parting in Green Street Courthouse was in September, 1860. A short time after Mitchel's arrival in Paris, whilst he was residing in Rue de l'Est, a knock was heard at the door, and on opening it Mitchel's young son beheld a "tall, spare, scholarly-looking gentleman," who addressed him thus: "By what strange concatenation of favourable circumstances do I behold myself again on the threshold of John Mitchel?" He was soon installed in "the frugally-elegant" home of his dearest friend, and during his short stay the Mitchel family got little repose, for their visitor ever objected to interrupting a conversation with John Mitchel for the mere sake of going to bed. Their second reunion took place towards the end of August, 1862, when Mitchel and his family were staying in a suburban villa at Choisy-le-roi. Just at this time two daughters of the illustrious Irishman became converts to Catholicity, and went to reside in the Convent of Sacré Coeur. As Mitchel and his young son were about to return to America, Mrs. Mitchel and her daughter Minnie went back with Father Kenyon to Ireland. During their stay of some months they visited the Chapel House, Templeberry.

In Paris, September, 1866, the friends again met, and for the last time. John Martin accompanied

Father Kenyon. Mitchel, in his *Jail Journal*, gives a very pleasant account of this final reunion—pleasant, but overcast by a sad presentiment that it was indeed the final meeting. During the fortnight of Father Kenyon's stay they had "an astonishing life of it"—sight-seeing all day and talking all night. Mitchel being then financial agent to the Fenians, it may be surmised that the discussions between "the three Johns" were of a lively nature; neither Martin nor Father Kenyon agreed wholly with Mitchel's political views at this time.

Together Mitchel and Father Kenyon visited the Irish College in Paris—the President, Dr. Lynch, being known to the latter. The students gave them an ovation—cheering when they recognised Mitchel with enthusiasm "such as the peaceful region of Ste. Genéviève" seldom heard. "God bless the boys," said Father Kenyon as they passed out; "God bless the boys, anyhow; *they're* always right!"

The love of these two men for one another gave each a fresh interest, an additional zest in life; and one of the two clung to hope and health whilst the other lived. When death cut short the career of Father Kenyon, Mitchel's voice took on a tone of sadness. The news of the priest's death\* was received with feelings of inexpressible sorrow by Mitchel's family. The children, who had found a home in Templeberry during the summer following their father's transportation, had

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\* See John Martin's Letter to Mitchel on the death of Father Kenyon (Appendix).

many affectionate recollections of "Father John." Writing to his sister at this time, John Mitchel said:—"You tell me of the death of Thomas Crawford, a man for whom I had more real affection than for any of my County Down friends. I say County Down, for there was a Tipperary man I did love still better. . . ."

Another friend, Peter E. Gill, often sought the society of the priest in the seclusion of Templeberry. P. E. Gill was the owner and editor of the *Tipperary Advocate*, a now defunct journal whose force and honesty gained for it the distinction of being numbered amongst the dangerous periodicals filed and preserved in Dublin Castle. Better known as "The General," Peter Gill was widely known in his day as the stout champion of Tenant Right, Repeal, and all national interests. A man of considerable scholarship, gifted with eloquence, humour, and goodness of heart, he was a universal favourite. He was more than once Nationalist candidate for his native county, and when the election contests were in progress his staunchest supporter was Father Kenyon. At such times it was no uncommon sight to see the two friends arm-in-arm walking through the streets of Nenagh or Clonmel. A descendant\* of P. E. Gill sketches in a few vivid phrases their most striking characteristics:—"There was an extraordinary friendship between them, and they were such a contrast—Father Kenyon a philosopher and a scholar, with a caustic tongue and pen something of the style of Carlyle, whom he resembled

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\* R. P. Gill, Esq., of Nenagh.

in appearance. 'The General,' a genial, hearty, handsome man, full of wit and humour, and fun—which is different—with a gift of flamboyant oratory that would carry a crowd anywhere.'

John Martin became acquainted with Father Kenyon at one of the meetings of the Council of the Confederation in their assembly room in D'Olier Street early in 1847. The quiet, earnest, lovable character of Martin attracted the sympathy of Father Kenyon, who possessed the power to read men's minds, and was seldom led astray in his estimate of human nature. A casual meeting, a few fragmentary conversations, paved the way to a close friendship, and John Martin regarded Father Kenyon as, next to Mitchel, his most cherished friend. When both men had left youth and its hope and health behind, their companionship became something even dearer. Up to the year before his death Father Kenyon visited each summer Martin's beautiful home, Kilbroney, near Rostrevor. And Mrs. Martin accompanied her husband to Temple-derry more than once. Though of another religion, they always attended the little chapel in the glen of Meanagh with their host and listened with the enraptured congregation to the wonderful sermons that have made his name live in the hearts of Tipperary.

Dr. Griffin, of George's Street, Limerick, a medical practitioner of note, was an intimate friend, who shared Father Kenyon's strong views on O'Connellite corruption at a time when many Nationalists shrank from criticism of "the Country's Leader." A brother of Gerald Griffin, he was a man of broad



views on subjects literary and political, and was an important figure in the civic life of Limerick in his day.

With John O'Hagan, Father Kenyon had much in common. An extreme admiration for classic lore, and for literature of a romantic or poetic kind—a sensibility to the beautiful in life and art, drew them together, and their friendship was a life-long one. They travelled to Paris to welcome Mitchel to this hemisphere in October, 1860.

The priest had many friends; but for the men of '48 he had a special tenderness: the strongest and noblest tie that can bind men—the pursuit of a lofty ideal—had for one glorious “intense and rapid” season thrown them together. Like his friend Mitchel, he was once, and once only, filled with the joy which vehement action and devotion to a great cause can inspire, and which “colder, tamer spirits never know.”

In the early years of the Fenian Organisation the stability of Luby's allegiance to James Stephens was threatened. Once again Father Kenyon's advice proved a decisive factor, as it had many a time previously in the deliberations of the '48 Confederates. Certain friends were urging upon Luby—then one of Stephens' chief lieutenants—the advisability of taking a more prominent part. Luby was an extremely able man; and he was ambitious. He took counsel with his friend Father Kenyon, as he was swayed by a strong feeling of honour and duty on one side, and personal ambition on the other.

When asked by Luby whether in his (Father

Kenyon's) opinion he or Stephens was the better man to lead the movement, Father Kenyon replied, with a hearty laugh: "Luby, don't ask me."

The style in which this not-to-be-mistaken reply was expressed left no doubt on Luby's mind. He seized the hand of his reverend friend and, thanking him for his candid opinion, said: "Henceforth, Father Kenyon, I know my duty, and shall act up to it." From that hour till he was removed from the dock in Green Street in 1865, Stephens had no more devoted follower than Thomas Clarke Luby.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### POEMS AND ANECDOTES.

One approaches the consideration of Father Kenyon's poetic writings with a mind not quite free from bias; when we have grown familiar with his sterling sincerity, his forceful enthusiasm, his frequent outbursts of ironic humour, we would wish to estimate at a high value his poetic efforts. We shall content ourselves by saying all that is possible as to their merits, and leave to others the less gracious task of commenting on their demerits.

Father Kenyon had the true *furor poeticus*. He was endowed with the mind and imagination, the glow of feeling, the sensitiveness which are part of the temperament of the poet. The ear highly trained to appreciate "apt numbers" he lacked, but the ear for vivid and sweet-sounding phrases he surely possessed. Of the following verses it is only necessary to say that they have a charm of their own for which we look in vain in more modern popular poetry. They have genuine sentiment for their foundation, and are quite free from conscious striving after effect. Though merely the hasty by-products of a keen and busy intellect, they have the intrinsic value that belongs to all great poetry. They give us nearer visions of beauty than many songs of laureates and pencillings of distinguished artists.

The following sonnet is a successful translation of an Italian piece, and imitates with striking precision the classical mode of Italian and pre-Raphaelite sonneteers:—

### LOVE AND DEATH.

(From the Italian of Girolamo Pompei.)

“Morte ed amore a rinnovar gli strali, etc.”  
 Grim Death and Cupid made a holiday,  
 Some lustres since to get their bolts a top,  
 From long use blunted—Vulcan had a drop  
 I’ th’ head that morn, and so things went astray;  
 For, having fused them in a common mould,  
 When all was done he knew not which was which,  
 But, first to hand, straightway began to pitch  
 Them in, till neither quiver more could hold.  
 Whereby it oft-time haps that Love and Death  
 Play at cross purposes in these queer days,  
 And laugh at the issues outright. In a breath  
 We hear how poor young So-and-So decays  
 And *dies* who should have *loved*; while old—i’ faith  
 He passed yestreen for Gretna in a chaise!

N.N.

To take a prose sentence and build a poem on it that will be in every way a poem, is an extremely difficult task. This is what Father Kenyon essayed when he chose a passage from his letter to the *Nation*—“Raffled Conciliation”—and embodied its *motive* in the verses below:—

### THE TRUE MAN’S HOPE.

“A union not centred in virtue is the shell of a blind nut. It is well to break it. An empty hope is dispelled; a

lingering disappointment prevented. It is a knot of maggots festering rather than living, and fruitful only of disgust."

—Rev. J. K.

Words of power! Truth is power.  
Words of deep and mystic lore!  
Searching, between flesh and spirit,  
Baring to its secret core,  
Branding with a brand and searing  
Where this land of ours is sore!

Not in Heaven—for God is gracious,  
Poureth light alike on all  
Willeth unto all salvation,  
Aideth whosoever call,  
Loveth—mother never loved so—  
Not in Heaven was wrought our thrall!

Saxon foemen hath not wrought it—  
Saxon foemen are but clay,  
Lacking meat and drink and clothing,  
To subsist from day to day,  
Fading as the flower fadeth,  
Rotting like the grass away!

Statesmen never wrung this ruin  
From the sweat of toiling brain—  
Written words however pointed,  
May be overscrawled again;  
Needs but puny blade to sever  
Toughest parchment skin in twain!

Men and brothers! has disunion  
Bred this cancer in our isle?  
Heed them not the glozing preachers  
Who your sense would thus beguile!  
Rather trust the truer instinct  
Which did counsel you erewhile:

How that union oft betokens  
Festering filth as maggots swarm;  
Oft, rapacity, as luce  
A trout, or trout absorb a worm.  
Often both, yea sometimes nothing,  
Like the mason's empty charm:

How that sole and only virtue  
Roman virtue as of yore,  
Still exalteth men and nations  
Vice doth sink them even more—  
This an island sunk and rose not—  
Rots and rises not, therefore!

Ever since the Saxon stranger  
Crept within our fruitful fold,  
Hounds to lap his steaming fleshpots,  
Churls have sprung to clutch his gold,  
Cravens who made life more precious  
Than themselves, their birthright sold.

Ever, when a chieftain rallied  
Shunned him half his selfish peers,  
Ever, when high truth was spoken  
Prudent traders stopped their ears,  
Dull-cold blinder still the masses  
Groped adown the glooming years.

So, seven dreary ages through  
Traitor vice hath foiled the few  
Who did battle with the Saxon—  
Who to Fatherland stood true!  
Traitor vice, so, Men and Brothers,  
Gnaws this generation too.

Better still to perish bravely  
On the soil you may not free,  
Better roam in honoured exile  
Faithful to your dear country,  
Better than embrace the Saxon,  
Mount and weight the gallows tree!

For, the patriot flame if tended  
Yet may sweep from East to West,  
For, the Irish faith if cherished,  
Yet may kindle breast from breast;  
Hug this Hope, my trusty brothers,  
And we crush the Union pest!

N.N.

In the "Fantasy" we find the expression of the "Speirbhean" ideal—a traditional one in Irish and 'Anglo-Irish' literature. The self-same influence to which we owe the *Aislingi* of Aodhigán O'Rathaille and of our other great poets, is discernible in these verses. Had Father Kenyon written in his native tongue he would assuredly have entitled the poem *Aisling* instead of *Fantasy*.

There is also evidence of Keats' and Milton's influence, and before we learnt from John Augustus O'Shea that the former was one of Father Kenyon's favourites amongst the English poets we traced some epithets from Keats' *Endymion* in the equally youthful, exuberant and imaginative melodies of "N.N."

An occasional phrase such as those occurring in the couplet:

" . . . She is come, she is come

Like an angel guest to my hermit home," sets us wondering as to whether their author had read Tennyson; if not, the similarity between these lines and those of *Maud* is an unaccountable coincidence.

The *Fantasy* is not the least beautiful of the many beautiful lays inspired by the vision of Freedom from *Roisin Dhú*, *Caith Ní Dhuibhir* and

*Gile na Gile* down to the restrained and fervent stanzas of Pearse and MacDonagh.

It is not improbable that Father Kenyon composed many more poetical pieces, but these—over the letters N.N.—are the only ones found in the columns of the *Nation* up to midsummer 1847, when he ceased to write for that paper.

### A FANTASY.

Clohonan's sweet and juicy meadows  
 Are praukt with cowslips; sleepy shadows  
 From Ballincara's ridges speeding  
 A dreamy dance through the vale are leading,  
 Noon-silence broods over Cnocdageen;  
 No thing of life may be heard or seen;  
 When forth from the glades of deep Lahawn  
 A maiden steps like a lightsome fawn.

Clohonan's meads appear straightway,  
 More green; the cowslip ranks more gay.  
 Glad music rolls from the leafy screen  
 Of forests piled in Cnocdageen.  
 A spirit enlivens the languid hour,  
 A spirit of freedom, a spirit of power,  
 A spirit all other spirits above,  
 Of abounding life and abounding love.

She comes, she nears, in her azure vest  
 With a quickened eye, and a heaving breast.  
 The grass upthrills to the melody  
 Of her soft footfall, as she paces by.  
 The sheep and the kine as she skims along  
 List as you list to a trancing song;  
 Look when the radiant vision is past,  
 As you look at a joy when you look your last.



She is nearer still, on the parting stile.  
 I can see the dawn of your flushing smile;  
 When the rude air ruffles her floating gown  
 As she springs with exuberant ardour down  
 I can mark the ankle of delicate mould  
 In its dainty hosing of silk and gold;  
 And the pearly veins of her neck transpire  
 An ecstasy through me as she draws nigher.

Clohonan's meadows and bosky dells,  
 The odorous peelings of cowslip bells,  
 They are now as nought she is come, she is come,  
 Like an angel guest to my hermit home!  
 Her magical presence absorbs my glance,  
 Her musical voice holds my ear in trance,  
 Rare gems of thought in its full depths showing,  
 With song-blooms over its borders blowing.

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Clohonan's meads are drear and dank,  
 Lahawn's deep glades are bare and blank;  
 O'er Ballinacara's bleak expanse  
 The fog-fiends drive a dismal dance;  
 The trees are naked in Cnocdageen,  
 The bird-notes hushed in its ruined screen,  
 She and summer away have flown,  
 Winter and I are here alone.

Clohonan's meads for other eyes  
 May don again their witcheries;  
 The cowslip bells peal out anew,  
 The hills and groves their youth renew;  
 In vain for me; my pilgrimage  
 Shall vision of bliss no more assuage;  
 O'er wintry life's horizon ne'er  
 Shall my lost Pleiad re-appear.

Two churches and two parochial houses stand as monuments in stone to the name and fame of Father Kenyon. The parochial house in Templeberry was built from his own plan by local builders and masons and the handy-man, Cash, who seems to have been a master of many arts. The house, when complete, was found to have no entrance, an oversight which had to be remedied by the erection of a winding staircase from the ground to a hole in the roof! Here the priest lived, surrounded by his pet animals, and waited on by a solitary domestic servant whose fame survives in literature and tradition down to the present day. This personage, Sara Kennedy, was known as "Sal o' the Wig," and acted as cook, housekeeper, coachman, groom, and jester in the parochial house. She was given her picturesque name by reason of the thick mass of curly hair she wore cropped close round forehead and ears. This unique character was immortalised by the pen of Miss O'Shea (afterwards Mrs. O'Shea Dillon), who wrote a serial in the *Shamrock* (circa November, 1869) entitled "Sal o' the Wig." Whilst on a visit with her sister, Miss Marion O'Shea,\* at Father Kenyon's house this gifted young lady composed a song—"My Nobby Head of Hair"—which Sally used to sing to a wayward tune

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\* Miss M. O'Shea went to America, where she married, first, a Mr. Fortescue, and later Robert Roosevelt, uncle of Theodore Roosevelt. Her son, Kenyon Fortescue, is now an eminent New York lawyer, and another son, R. G. Fortescue, a captain in a U.S.A. cavalry regiment, acted as war correspondent to several New York papers during the late war.

on the fiddle. She was wont to drive the priest here and there through the country attired in an old frieze coat of his, and a man's hat; she was renowned far and near for her eccentric habits, and still figures in many a fireside tale. Father Kenyon said one morning: "Sally, I have some house property in Limerick, and I'll leave you one."

"Oh, no, Father," rejoined Sally, "you'll live a long time yet to enjoy them yourself."

"Well, now, Sally, I am sorry you refused it," said the priest, and there was no more about the matter. There is a tradition that he willed all he possessed to Peter E. Gill, who, after paying his "just debts and liabilities," found himself with a residue of two old plaster statues that Father Kenyon brought from Rome. Another account is given of a very valuable collection of books left by the priest to his brother, Father Patrick Kenyon, who was in Australia. It is also stated that Father Patrick died before receiving his brother's legacy. There is little doubt that Father Kenyon's worldly wealth at the time of his death was of slight substance. One of the houses left him by his mother was sold for taxes which he refused to pay as a protest against the excessive taxation of this country.

He usually collected the Christmas dues himself, and the old people who remember him say "it was very easy to pay him." Once during a collection he called the name of a certain John Lynch, who stepped forward to pay his dues. "John pulled out a purse," the story goes, "tied around the neck with a string as long as an ass's reins,

which he untied carefully. At length he drew out the sixpence which was the amount he and his equals usually paid. 'Now, John Lynch,' said the priest, 'you are a little behind time. If you were enlisted in a company of United Irishmen and your commanding officer called on you to fire it would not do for you to say, 'I'm going to load, sir.'''

There is a tale of James Stephens' seeking refuge in the priest's house in Templeberry, and of his being severely received by Father Kenyon, who did not actually encourage the Fenian movement,\* though, like Mitchel, he had nothing but respect and admiration for the men who forwarded it. He frowned when Stephens rushed in upon him whilst he was at dinner with P. E. Gill, but nevertheless he motioned him towards a movable board in the floor, through which the fugitive lowered himself. Later a goodly portion of the roast fowl the friends were discussing, was lowered through the trap-door, and when subsequently the police entered to make a search ("Quite a matter of form, I assure you, Father"), they found the priest calmly reading his Office; nor did he pay the slightest heed to their quest, which proved fruitless.

Of his eloquence, humour, and goodness of heart

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\* He shared Mitchel's idea that "there can be no secrecy in Ireland, so thickly is it planted with Castle spies." He gave no active assistance to an organisation which he regarded as foredoomed to failure. He was in the court when Flood, McAfferty, Duffy and Cody were sentenced, and wrote a "very touching and terrible account" of the scene to John Martin.

countless tales are extant. The people of his parish still remember portions of his sermons, and tell how more than once the bishop, when officiating in Temple-derry, used to preface his remarks with words such as: "Your good pastor has left me nothing to say." Once at a Confirmation ceremony the little church was so crowded that some of the plaster on the balcony fell, creating some little disturbance. Father Kenyon was in the pulpit, and when interrupted held up his hand for silence; then he said: "I was about to remark when the thread of my discourse was broken——" and continued his sermon. Thus, by his sangfroid and self-possession, what might have proved a panic was averted.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### DEATH OF FATHER JOHN KENYON.

(From the *Tipperary Advocate*, March 27, 1869.)

It becomes our painful duty this week to announce the demise of one whose name will long remain a household word in Tipperary for his unflinching and practical patriotism, brilliant talents, and extensive learning—Father John Kenyon, P.P., Templeberry. He was the true type of the Soggarth Aroon, whose love of country was only exceeded by his love of God. In the exciting days of '48 he threw himself heart and soul into the ranks of the Young Irelanders, and a valuable acquisition he was to their party by his talents as a writer and his high character as a clergyman. Some of his literary productions in the national cause appeared in the columns of the *Nation* (old series), and, for their lucid style and powerful reasoning, must establish his claim to a high rank amongst the writers of his country. After the failure\* of the '48 movement Father Kenyon retired from politics for some time, but his patriotism was undiminished, and he occasionally stood forth to defend the credulity of his countrymen against the high-sounding pretensions of high-sounding patriots, whom he severely castigated by his caustic sarcasms of voice and pen. Amongst those whom the noble-hearted priest opposed in politics many of our readers may remember the Earl of Arundel and Surrey when he offered himself as a candidate

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\* The writer, in using here the word "failure," speaks in a tone typical of the attitude of the general population of the country between 1849 and 1865. A reactionary wave had reduced the vitality of the national spirit, and the influence of Young Ireland was too personal, and too near in time, to be seen whole and in a true perspective.

As a practical issue '48 may be said to have failed; as a national movement it did not fail.

for the representation of Limerick. For many years Father John took no active part in political matters, but his anxiety for the cause of the tenant farmers impelled him to energetically oppose the return of the Whig candidates at the memorable Tipperary election. This was his last public act, and he afterwards lived in monastic retirement amongst his attached flock in Templederry. Never was a pastor more beloved by his people than was Father John Kenyon. He was almost idolised by them, and the wrapt attention with which they listened to his impressive sermons from the Altar of his mountain chapel proved what importance they attached to his every word. Long will the name of Father John be remembered by the people of Templederry. On last Sunday evening he terminated a comparatively long life—being in his 60th year. On Tuesday his remains were interred in his chapel amidst the sighs of his devoted parishioners. This closed the earthly career of one of the noblest patriots and most talented men of his age. May he rest in peace.

The priest expressed a wish to be buried in the little Churchyard of Latteragh near Templederry, but his parishioners united their voices in an appeal to have his remains interred within the church where his sacred duties had been performed so long and faithfully. The stone above bears the following inscription:—

“Have pity on me, at least you my friends, because the hand of the Lord hath touched me.”

Pray for the repose of the soul  
of the

REV. JOHN KENYON, P.P.,  
Templederry,

who died on the 21st March, 1869,  
in the fifty-seventh year of his age and the thirty-fifth  
of his sacred ministry.

R.I.P.

Grant him, O Lord, eternal rest, and let perpetual light  
shine on him. Amen.

The following was published in the *Tipperary Advocate* over the initials of Father Kenyon's cherished friend, Peter E. Gill:—

IN MEMORIAM.

DEATH OF FATHER KENYON.

This celebrated Irishman breathed his last on Palm Sunday evening between six and seven o'clock in his own house at Templederry, in the 58th year of his age. He had been seriously ill since the 5th of February, on which day he rode, as was his usual custom, to celebrate a Dead Mass at the late Mr. Ryan's, at the Half-Way House, Latteragh. On his return he was attacked with hemorrhage, to which he had been subject for a few years past, and by the time he arrived home he was quite exhausted from loss of blood. For seven weeks after he lay in patient suffering on his humble couch, which consisted of a hair mattress, supported by a sofa and a plain deal form made for the purpose by his favourite carpenter, Mr. Cash. During his illness he was visited by several of his parishioners, and, although loving and living in solitude, he occasionally sent for some friends to come to see him. Mr. James Ryan, of Clohonan, for whom he entertained the greatest friendship, was with him frequently during his illness. In the early portion of the day on which he departed he was rather cheerful, and saw some of his friendly visitors as usual. He talked to the Rev. Mr. Flannery, C.C., of Toomevara, over the reminiscences of old Clare in his usual refreshing and beautiful style, and expressed a hope that, with the return of April sunshine, he might again be able to saunter about the fields. On the same day he wrote a letter to the Right Rev. Dr. Power, R.C. Bishop of Killaloe, and his efforts to do so may, perhaps, have hastened the attack of hemorrhage which proved fatal.

As his life and sermons are sure to form a bright page in the history of his country, any attempt on our part to pay proper honour to his memory or to depict the virtues of the departed great is unnecessary, and would be wholly



insufficient. No finer intellect, no loftier genius, no nobler spirit, no warmer heart has appeared in the Irish race in our day. Ireland, Religion, and Literature have lost a great man, and when the mournful news of the death of the Patriot Priest of Templeberry reaches its destination his memory will be venerated and preserved with generous gratitude, for his unbounded patriotism, and honoured with all the respect which admiration for excellence the most genuine can excite. He will long be missed and his memory hallowed in the lovely valley of Templeberry, where, for over a quarter of a century he sweetened the atmosphere with the celestial beauty of his language and the silent merit of his unobtrusive virtues; unborn generations there will be taught, from the cradle, to lisp the name of the great Instructor whose brilliant genius scattered chaplets of unfading lustre around the brows of their fathers as he kindled the flame of piety in their breasts, while expounding the dazzling and undying light of Christianity in language so graceful, correct and eloquent that, whilst it elevated and sanctified Religion, it set the seal of conviction on the mind of the very humblest listener. Alas! His pure spirit has been wafted to that blissful eternity where no clouds shall dim its glory, but where it shall shine as a bright star for all time, and its Redeemer will smile complacently on the untarnished soul of him whose large and loving sympathies embraced everything beautiful in human life, and whose lofty patriotism and exquisite instincts made him the ornament of his country and of human nature.

In politics Father Kenyon always took his stand with the people in the advance guard. He had sovereign contempt for petitioning or whining for mercy to the English Parliament. His motto was "Strike and conquer"; he believed petition meant to a nation "Pine and die." In the soul-stirring times of '48, when Thomas F. Meagher, William Smith O'Brien and John Mitchel were to be placed on trial by the English garrison in Ireland he assembled a meeting of all the surrounding parishes at Clohonan, Templeberry, and on being moved to the chair by William

O'Leary delivered a powerful and eloquent address.\* His words still linger in the memories of those who heard them, and give a fair idea of the active part the lamented gentleman took in the struggle of the day.

After the failure\* of '48, although Father Kenyon to some extent withdrew from politics, still when any public occasion arose where it was necessary to speak out he always did so, and manfully and truthfully denounced political impostors and pharasaical pretenders with an unsparing hand, for which he was often subjected to misrepresentation and indiscriminating accusations; but his self-satisfied superiority enabled him to look with dignified indifference on his accusers, and to mourn inwardly for the depths of degradation to which the oscillations of human understanding sometimes carry unreasoning individuals.

Father Kenyon was three and thirty years on the mission in the Diocese of Killaloe. After leaving Maynooth, where he left his mark, he was appointed a curate on the 3rd March, 1836, to the Rev. Mr. Malone in the Parishes of Kilnoctish and Doora, and was promoted to a curacy in Ennis on the 16th September in the same year, where he remained till the 13th December, 1839, when he was removed to the Silvermines to Father Edward Magrath, P.P., of whom he always spoke in the most affectionate manner. He remained with "Honest Father Ned," as he used to style him, until 11th December, 1842, when he removed to the Parishes of Killeen and Meenagh, where for 27 years he reigned in the hearts of a good and grateful people, and, although laid in his narrow prison, death will fail to sever the silver chord of sympathy existing between them.

After the solemn rites of the Church his remains were interred in the body of the chapel in front of the Altar.

God rest his soul and peace to his ashes is the heartfelt prayer of the unworthy and disconsolate author of this meagre obituary—of one who perilled all for the sacred spell of his inspiring society—and who had the melancholy

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\* Elsewhere quoted.

See page 152, Footnote.

pleasure of witnessing the great man expire like a lamb resigned to his crucifix, and smiling—Heaven mirrored in his peaceful countenance.

P.E.G.

The following extracts, though penned with less rhetoric and flourish, will give an idea of the respect in which the Patriot Priest was held by all classes of his fellow-countrymen:—

(From the *Irishman*.)

It is with pain and unfeigned sorrow that we have to chronicle the death of Father Kenyon. There is no need to compile a eulogium. His very name is beloved by all his race. He was a priest—but he was a Patriot Priest. He loved his country, but not with that faithless love which shrinks from defending manfully the principles he held. He loved and defended Ireland. He did more—his heart revolted against sectionalism, and his hand clasped the hand of the Irish Protestant with a welcome and a warmth never to be forgotten. An intellect of the noblest type was his, a philosophic mind, a generous and dauntless heart. The people of Ireland on every shore are fellow-mourners with Tipperary.

(From the *Clonmel Chronicle*.)

The eminently-gifted and liberal-minded clergyman died at his residence, Templeberry, on the morning of Monday.\* His decease is regretted by his parishioners and by men of every class and creed. In political matters he once took an active and, as is well known, an extreme part; advancing years, however, brought greater moderation. For one thing was he specially remarkable—his earnest desire to live upon terms of friendly intercourse with his Protestant neighbours, and his wish never by act or word to wound the susceptibilities of those who differed from him in religious sentiment.

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\* Sunday evening.

“While others with not half his knowledge and capacity, his instinct of analysis, and his masterful eloquence were blooming and mellowing under the fostering sun of opportunity, he rusted in semi-oblivion. Although the priest has duties and scope for activities everywhere, and Father John Kenyon was a conscientious priest, one cannot help feeling that in a country parish he was out of his element. He could have done more work and better work elsewhere. To relegate the voice that might fill the aisles of some vast cathedral with its persuasive sound to a remote country chapel is a woful mistake—a misapplication of means to end, a waste of moral dynamics. One does not use the keen scimitar of Damascus where the edge of a homely cleaver is effective. . . . In politics a democrat, he was an aristocrat in his feelings, prejudices and carriage; he loved youth, flowers and song; the beautiful in humanity and nature.”

Thus did John Augustus O'Shea write of Father Kenyon, whom in his later years he knew intimately. He was but expressing the same idea that prompted Mitchel to say on one occasion to John Martin: “Alas! poor Father Kenyon, his case is to be pitied. There he is, high-lifted beyond the herd by his gifts, rarely accomplished, and he will pass away with the generation that knows him. He will leave nothing behind to preserve his name but rumour that fades like a mist.” But those rare qualities of mind and heart—that forceful personality did not “pass away with the generation that knew him.” To us he has bequeathed something more than garnered riches of intellect and rare

literary products of brain and imagination, something more than an individuality in letters as powerful and distingué as that of a Swift, a Johnson, or a Bossuet—the proud record of an Irish patriot “to God and Ireland true.”

For once let Mitchel be proven a false prophet. Let us see to it that the name of Father John Kenyon stand high above the mark of “rumour that fades like a mist.”

## APPENDIX.

### JOHN MITCHEL TO REV. J. KENYON.

My Dear Father Kenyon—So you don't understand my prospectus or my letters to J. Martin, save on "one theory," and that the wrong theory. You and I, then, are not only in different degrees of longitude, but are out of one another's latitude. Do we look at the world now not only from different points of view (that we probably always did), but from such remote points, and through such variously contorted *media*, that we can't even perceive it is the same world we are looking at? Have our two paths been diverging<sup>a</sup>—or has one of us been sitting still while the other has gone forward, or back, or round? And which has been sitting, which expatiating? I admit that in the case of a man (*à grege me*) who has never been but once engrossed and possessed by a great cause, whose whole life, and energy, and passion converged themselves once to one focus, and were then dissipated into the general atmosphere, who dashed himself one good time against the hard world, and was smashed to smithereens—in the case of such a fellow as this, I admit that the possibility is *he* may be the stationary and sitting-still individual. His life, or the fragment of it, then and there crystallises, and he never grows older, but is truly dead and a ghost. There now is an admission for you.

Nevertheless here I am, or the fragment of me, dwelling in the United States, likely to be a citizen of the same, surrounded by a world of people, all alive and life-like, dealing and talking with them every day—for they do not know that I am a ghost, and even if they did would not be at all afraid—and I cannot but take an interest (of a certain spectral sort) in them and their fortunes. Not only that, but I must work also at something, in a somnam-

bulistic manner, while above ground. And I seem to myself to be actuated by the very same sort of motives, and to be moved by the same impulses, passions and affections as ever. I do still (I think) abhor injustice and oppression, and hold the same notions of right and wrong. Now, in looking back, and trying to analyse my own feelings, or principles, or whatever it was, that made me act and write as I did in Ireland, I have found that there was perhaps less of love in it than hate—less of filial affection to my country than of scornful impatience at the thought that I had the misfortune, I and my children, of being born in a country which suffered itself to be oppressed and humiliated by another; less devotion to truth and justice than raging wrath against cant and insolence. And, hated being the thing I chiefly cherished and cultivated, the thing which I specially hated was the *British system*—everywhere, at home and abroad, as it works in England itself, in India, on the Continent of Europe, and in Ireland. Living in Ireland, and wishing to feel proud, not ashamed, of Ireland, it was there first and most that I had to fight with that great enemy. For it is a great, or at least a big and strong thing, the British system. It has money in its purse, and a code of opinion received to a really wonderful extent by all mankind, that is by the richest, that is by the strongest part of mankind. It is so big that it keeps many things in their place by attraction, and many other things, me, for example, by repulsion. I also depend on it and revolve round it, not like a satellite, but at least like an aerolite, wishing always that I could strike it between wind and water, and shiver its timbers.

As for Ireland and her destiny, all that now depends absolutely upon the destinies of the British Empire. So far as I can judge now, by all the *indicia* I am aware of, Ireland is not even likely to be one of the powers or agencies that will destroy the enemy; rather she will help, and is helping, to save him. The stillness and deadness of Ireland are wonderful to me. I don't believe that I can pretend to understand the phenomenon—but there it is. Whatever is now moving action and articulation in Ireland

(for I count nothing on the *Dundalk Democrat* and a few seditious placards) seems to me not only British, but more British than the British themselves. On that subject I have not patience to dilate.

Well, all my behaviour from Nov. '45 down to this Nov. '57 seems to myself to be consistent, to be of one piece. I have not only contended with the enemy of mankind constantly, but on the same argument, varying it only with varying circumstances "*coelum non animam mutans.*" In Ireland I sought to rouse up national pride to such a point that we could "*dismember the Empire,*" which would have ruined the whole affair and sent the enemy (that is, the British system) a naked beggar on the world. Ireland just then was suffering the worst by that system, and would have gained the most by its overthrow. I was Irish, and intensely Irish, so my business then was clear and plain. But now I meet that evil power here also; he is everywhere, and nowhere more active and mischievous than in these United States. I perceive in the institutions, and of late in the tendencies, proclivities, aspirations (these are vile, vague words) of the Southern States a special hostility to the British system; not hostility arising from the accident of England being active in suppressing and loud in denouncing slavery, but hostility founded on essential differences in the two types of human society. You seem to imagine that my plans look to an arraying of the United States, or at least the Southern States (after disruption) against England. Yes, but not in the way you mean. England would rather quarrel with the North than with the South, and so long as she is able to order cotton and pay for it the South will never quarrel with her. But the South is trying one form of civilisation with signal success; England has tried another (I should say *the other*), and is going shortly to ruin. I want to promote the success of the one, and the ruin of the other. Consider this one point alone—the danger, weakness, and unsoundness of England arise in great measure from her vast manufactures. She keeps two millions of people clothing the world, and so has become a nation of hucksters. Let her be



furnished these few years to come with more and cheaper cotton—crammed, surfeited, choked with cotton, and she will soon lose entirely, what is even now so much impaired, the military spirit without which a nation cannot live. Besides, if there were no grudge to be satisfied against the enemy at all, for the mere well-being of these Southern States and of the Africans who now or hereafter may be slaves therein, I should zealously maintain the cause of slavery, and try to make the people here proud and fond of it as a national institution, and advocate its extension by re-opening the trade in negroes. You say, in this letter of yours, “Actively to promote the system for its own sake would be something monstrous.” Why? I cannot as much as conceive any reason for this judgment. Actively I promote it for its own sake, and shall promote it. It is good in itself, good in its relations with other countries, good every way. And I do much want to know what was in your mind when you wrote? I bethink me that I do not perfectly know the position held just now by the Catholic Church with regard to the *enslavement* of men. Whatever that may be, however, it has no application to negro slaves bought on the coast of Africa. To enslave *them* is impossible or to set them free either; they are born and bred slaves.

### LIMERICK CITY ELECTION—NOMINATION OF CANDIDATES.

The following report of the election in Limerick is an abridged one which appeared in the *Nation*. Apropos of Father Kenyon’s action on this occasion Mr. Arthur Griffith\* says:—

“We lack Irish historical painters, not great scenes to inspire them. None is greater than the scene when Father Kenyon stood up before the murderous mob of Limerick commanded by Town Councillor Devitt, and directed by Gribben and Coleman, and while it shrieked for his blood,

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\* In “Place-Hunters in Irish Politics,” *Nationality*, 24th February, 1917.

thundered out: 'The system of despotism set up by John O'Connell does not differ except in degree from the terrorism of the French Revolution. . . . If there were no other man in my native city to raise his voice against place-hunting I shall do so. . . . If there be a single one amongst you with me,' he cried to the surging mob, 'let him lift his hand.' Many were with him in sympathy, but their courage failed them in that frenzied mob. One hand alone shot up—that of a youth who dared the place-hunters from the centre of their legions. 'God bless you, my lad, you will be a good man,' said Father Kenyon."

On Wednesday, the 4th inst., at eleven o'clock, a court was held in the new City Courthouse before the High Sheriff, Richard Russell, Esq., for the nomination of candidates for the representation of Limerick in the Imperial Parliament.

The High Sheriff having read her Majesty's writ, Mr. Martin Homan, T.C., came forward amidst loud cheers and proposed Mr. John O'Brien (vehement cheering).

Rev. Mr. Brahan, P.P., St. Mary's, came forward amidst loud cheers, and seconded the nomination. He said—Let me beg of you as a favour that you will conduct yourselves with good temper and order, and if there be any person present who is disposed to say anything you don't approve of, give him a patient hearing, and thus prove that you are not afraid to fairly discuss the cause that you have espoused (cheers).

Mr. Thomas Wallnut (Mayor of Limerick) said—Mr. High Sheriff and electors, I come forward with pride and pleasure to propose Mr. John O'Connell, son of the Liberator. (Cheers and cries of "Bravo.") In nominating the son of Daniel O'Connell I am sure it will not be necessary on my part to detain you by a lengthened description of his claims on the citizens of Limerick, and not only of Limerick, but every city and town in Ireland (cheers).

Rev. Mathew O'Connor, P.P., then came forward and seconded the nomination of Mr. John O'Connell. The only difficulty he felt was his inability to do justice to his merits. You have selected him as your member, and it will be a

proud remembrance to him that he has been chosen not by one class of electors, but by the concurrence of all. At the preliminary meeting he was chosen by the Old and Young Irishmen (no, no).

A Voice—Success to them for that.

Mr. O'Connor—The manner in which the electors have exercised the trust reposed in them does honour to the City of Limerick, and they are worthy of such a representative as Mr. John O'Connell.

The High Sheriff then inquired whether there was any other candidate.

The Rev. Mr. Kenyon, who has a commanding appearance, an erect front, a clear intellectual eye, and a powerful intonation of voice, rose from the seat he occupied at one side of the bench and was proceeding to speak when a man named Gribben, agent for the *Pilot*, said insultingly—You are not an elector. Go to your college friend, Frost\* (groans).

Rev. Mr. Kenyon—Should any (groans and confusion, and cries of "You're not an elector").

Rev. Mr. Braham—I will take it as a personal favour that you hear Mr. Kenyon.

Rev. Mr. Kenyon—Allow me, my friends, to speak a few words to you (groans, and cries of "We won't"). Is there any man in the court who has any charge to make against me? Am I not an honest man, and the son of an honest man,

Gribben—You are not. Sit down. You are not an elector. You are not registered six months.

Rev. Mr. Kenyon—I am an elector. I have a freehold inherited from my father, who obtained it by his honest industry (loud groans and uproar).

Rev. Mr. O'Connor, P.P., here came to the front of the bench, and stood on the top of it, amidst the most enthusiastic cheering. He exhorted them to hear Mr. Kenyon quietly.

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\* Mr. Frost had been formerly a Catholic clergyman. He had become a Protestant.

Gribben was again interrupting the proceedings by applying insulting language to Mr. Kenyon, when

The Sheriff threatened to have him removed.

Rev. Mr. O'Connor—Mr. Kenyon is as well qualified to speak as any other man here.

A Voice—He is a Paddy McKew.

Rev. Mr. Kenyon—I am an humble man—one of yourselves. (Groans.)

Gribben—You are a disgrace to us.

Rev. Mr. Kenyon—My fellow-citizens, hear me. I would lay down my life for the honour and glory of this my native city. I stand up to exercise my right to propose a candidate. I have no objection to Mr. John O'Brien. I have a high respect for him, and I believe him an honest man. All that I require of him is that he take the pledge against place-begging. (Hear, hear, and no, no, and great uproar.)

Gribben—Turn him out, turn him out. Send him after Frost. (Yells and groans.)

Rev. Mr. Kenyon—Mr. Sheriff, will you let me say one word, (Hisses and groans.)

Rev. Mr. O'Connor—Fie! Fie!

High Sheriff—You are only detaining yourselves here and delaying the business, for I must stay here all day unless Mr. Kenyon is heard.

Rev. Mr. Kenyon—Citizens of Limerick—

Coleman, a pig-jobber (in a loud voice and in a menacing attitude)—I would knock out his eye in the very court. (Cries of "Shame.")

Sheriff—You must give fair play. What are you afraid of?

Mr. Devitt—I ask you, as you love John O'Connell, as you regard his character, and wish to see him returned, do not allow any turbulence on your part to be a cause of the adjournment of the proceedings. That is what is wanted by those who are opposing us. Give Mr. Kenyon a hearing, and you shall have full liberty, when he has done, to give vent to your just indignation. Reserve it till the reverend gentleman has exhausted his bile. We are all anxious to

go to Dublin to the funeral of the Liberator, and unless you hear him you will prevent our going.

Rev. Mr. Kenyon—Citizens of Limerick—— (Confusion and groans.)

Rev. Mr. O'Connor, P.P.—Shame, shame!

Rev. Mr. Kenyon—I wish you would listen to the advice of your pastors, who are my worthy friends, and give me a patient hearing. I only want to make a plain statement of facts. (Terrible uproar.) I tell you, and I do so not from any disrespect, for I love you all, and I believe you honest——

A Voice—That is more than you are.

Rev. Mr. O'Connor, P.P.—Turn that man out.

Rev. Mr. Kenyon—I will have freedom of discussion. I will not suffer myself to be put down by such despotism as this. I must be heard, if it were at the peril of my life. I shall have freedom or death. (Cheers and groans.) I shall never yield to the dictation of a Government or a mob. (Groans and uproar.) I will vote for John O'Brien if he takes the pledge against place-hunting. (Confusion.) I will not vote for John O'Connell. (Hear and groans.) He is not worthy of the vote of any honest man. (Terrible uproar.) Listen to me—I will prove it to you. I do not wish to captivate your fancy, even if I were able to do so; I will confine myself to facts.

Several Voices—Turn him out.

Rev. Mr. Kenyon—I oppose Mr. John O'Connell. (Uproar.) Why do I oppose? Because he is a slave and a tyrant. (Great yelling, and cries of "Sit down.") I will never sit down unless you first hear me. (Hear and groans.) Listen to a plain statement. (Great uproar and excitement.)

Rev. Mr. O'Connor, P.P., and Rev. Mr. Casey here jumped over the bench on the witness table, amidst loud cheers, and remonstrated with the mob.

Rev. Mr. Casey—Hear him, whatever he has to say. Answer him if you can, and don't shout him down. We cannot go to the poll, and we must give up the cause we have won if you will not hear Mr. Kenyon.

Rev. Mr. Kenyon (after Mr. Braham and he had shaken hands) then proceeded—Will you believe now that I know and love my friends? They know and love me. Do you think they would love me and shake hands with me if they thought I was a dishonest man? Why, therefore, will you not listen? My reasons shall be simple and few. (Hear, hear.) I came here last night at the hour of 9 o'clock. I thought some preparations had been made to oppose place-hunters. I was disappointed; and from the very same cause that is trampling on public liberty this day. There is a system pervading all classes. (Hear, hear.) I believe the poor people are honest. (Cheers.) But I only ask them to be wise. There are 3,000 good honest men like yourselves in Dublin.

A Voice—You are not honest at any rate.

Rev. Mr. Kenyon—Listen to me. These 3,000 men, actuated by the instincts of truth and the love of justice, put their names to a written document. How should that document be treated by a man who loved liberty? Would he not respect it? He would respect it, no matter how much he believed those who signed it to be in error. John O'Connell trampled it in the gutter of Dublin. (Great uproar, amidst which Rev. Mr. Egan called on them to "hear the truth.") Fellow-citizens, suppose that 3,000 of you may hereafter put your names to a public document, in which you may wish to remonstrate with Mr. John O'Connell, I ask you will you give a man power that would trample on you when it comes to your turn? Give me the man that will not trample upon the honestly-expressed remonstrance of the people. I have come to raise my voice, if it were to be at the expense of my life—to lift at least one manly voice against the enthronement of a despot. (Great uproar.) I tell you—and I do so as a man of some reflection and reading—as a minister of religion—

A Voice—We do not acknowledge your right to teach us. (Groans and yells.)

Rev. Mr. Kenyon—It does not depend on your acknowledgment. I have my credentials from a higher authority.

My firm conviction is that the system of despotism set up by Mr. John O'Connell does not differ, except in degree, from the terrorism of the French Revolutionists; and that if he is allowed to proceed in his career, and his power and his means should be equal to his inclinations, he would be capable of cutting off your heads. (Groans and hisses).

Gribben—He will get the power.

Rev. Mr. Kenyon—Are you not Repealers? (Cries of "We are.") I know you are—so am I. (Cries of "You aren't.")

The Mayor here called for a hearing for the reverend gentleman.

Rev. Mr. Kenyon—If you reflect as reasonable men—if you look through the mist of prejudice—you will soon see your real position, and the use that is made of you by scheming politicians. You are not the men that for gold would sell your country. You are the men who have always suffered by agitation. I tell you that it is absurd to ever expect that the Union will be repealed by John O'Connell and the thousand patriots of his stamp. (Groans, and cries of "Turn him out.") Take the man unstained by Saxon gold.

A Voice—Go and vote for Sam Dixon.

Rev. Mr. Kenyon—I would vote for him before I would vote for John O'Connell. (Great uproar and yelling.)

A Voice—Give him just five minutes, and let him drop it.

Rev. Mr. Kenyon—At worst you must all admit that there is no charge of dishonesty against me. Therefore, you ought to respect me, although you believe me in error. If you wish to shake off Saxon dominion, select men of pure hands, unstained by foreign gold; men of brave hearts; men whose characters are so pure and transparent that you can see through them; men that would die rather than descend to a meanness or a sophism. Select a man that fears no mortal—that fears God alone—that fears no Government—that will swear eternal hostility to Saxon rule in this land—a man that will "do or die." (Loud cheers.) Electors of Limerick, if there were no other man in my native city—which I love—to raise his voice against place-

hunting and corruption, I shall do so. It shall not be said in history that this ancient city, of high renown, will be degraded without one man to lift up his voice against it. I propose Richard O'Gorman, Jun., of Dublin. If there is not a man to second it, let it fall to the ground. The eloquent speaker then resumed his seat amidst groans and hisses.

The Sheriff then asked if there was any elector who would second the nomination of Mr. O'Gorman. (Cries of "None.")

The Sheriff then called for a show of hands, first for John O'Brien, and then for John O'Connell, when a whole forest appeared to be held up. There were a good many, however, who did not hold up their hands.

The Sheriff then called for a show of hands for Mr. O'Gorman.

Rev. Mr. Kenyon held up his hand alone, and in an attitude of calm and sublime defiance against the derision and shouts of the populace.

The Sheriff then declared the show of hands in favour of Messrs. O'Brien and O'Connell.

Rev. Mr. Kenyon—Then I demand a poll.

It was announced to Mr. Kenyon that he was answerable for the expenses.

Rev. Mr. Kenyon said in twenty-four hours he would be prepared. (Groans and confusion.)

The lawyers again consulted, the groaning and hooting of the reverend gentleman still continuing.

Sheriff—Will you not give freedom to all?

Rev. Mr. Casey then proceeded to address the people. He said—I congratulate you on the part of my native city, and though I have a friendship of an ancient date for Mr. Kenyon, and I saw and respected his mind when in college, I reserve for myself the right to differ from him now. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) The reverend gentleman, having concluded an address of some length, warmly shook hands with Mr. Kenyon, amidst murmurs of disapprobation.

The High Sheriff then adjourned the court till 12 o'clock.



next day for the purpose of swearing-in the officers and making arrangements for the polling booths.

On leaving the court the Rev. Mr. Kenyon was surrounded by a furious mob, who not only groaned and hooted him, but dared to lay hands on an anointed priest of God, some of them threatening to take his life. The horrible intention, however, was defeated by the active exertions of the Rev. Mr. Casey, who is an honour and an ornament to his profession; by Mr. George J. O'Connell, Mr. Paul Creagh, Mr. R. Potter, and Mr. Patrick Lynch, solicitor, who accompanied Mr. Kenyon to the residence of the Rev. Mr. Casey, that gentleman having taken his arm the entire way. Mr. Crips, too, on horseback, and attended by some of the police, accompanied them. No violence occurred beyond the fierce groaning and insulting epithets of the mob, till Mr. Kenyon reached the residence of his reverend friend in Cornwallis Street.

Wherever the reverend gentleman afterwards appeared in the streets he was followed and groaned, and we regret to say that the disgrace of this cowardly and brutal attack was extended to the mother and sisters of Mr. Kenyon.

### THURSDAY.

This day, at 12 o'clock, the Sheriff held a court for the purpose of swearing of the officers having charge of the elections, and for perfecting the securities for the expense. This business having been disposed of,

Rev. Mr. Kenyon, after obtaining permission from the Sheriff to say a few words, addressed the people amidst hooting and groans. He said—I have one request to make, and, bitter as is your hostility to me, I have still sufficient reliance on the virtue of my countrymen to think they will grant my request. For anything you have said to myself I freely forgive you. I told you yesterday, notwithstanding your hatred of me, that I loved you. I tell you the same now, for I do sincerely believe that, though led astray, you have still within you the essential qualifications that constitute a good and virtuous people. I believe you are acting under the influence of a perverted judgment.

Indeed, I know you are. I care not what you do to myself, but I have a mother whom I love, and unprotected sisters, who I beg of you not to molest. I heard only this morning that a crowd numbering 1,000, as I have been told, assembled last night opposite their dwelling to annoy them. I hope this annoyance will not be repeated. (Hear, hear, and cries of "It wont.") Wreak all your vengeance on me, but do not, I implore you, invade the sanctuary of my dear mother and her unprotected daughters. This is all I have to ask you. (Hear.)

The people said they would not do so again.

Harry, the newsman, with his Repeal cap of 1843, in crepe, and a Repeal button in his coat, harangued the people against Mr. Kenyon in very exciting language, a course to which, no doubt, he was advised by others. The Mayor had at length to interfere.

In the course of the day the reverend gentleman and his friends were groaned; and at nightfall, in going to the residence of his mother, he was followed by a numerous mob, who continued to groan him as far as Thomond-Gate Bridge.

At five o'clock in the evening Mr. Kenyon deposited the third part of the expenses. In a short time there were received numerous subscriptions from clergy and laity, but not to the amount in which he involved himself. The booths, which were erected in the Courthouse and Potato Market, were not completed till a late hour.

### FRIDAY.

The polling commenced this morning at 8 o'clock, and, strange to say, the excitement and violence of these two or three previous days, we never saw the poll at an election open so quietly. The friends of Mr. O'Gorman had no time to organise, canvass, or to make any kind of preparation. They could not get even a Committee Room. It was a subject of very generally expressed regret among them that the step was not taken before a canvass commenced for the other candidates.

The friends and supporters of the latter had all their

arrangements completed in the anticipation of a contest with Mr. Dixon, who resigned only at the last moment.

The proposing of Mr. O'Gorman was entirely the Rev. Mr. Kenyon's own act, and was done unknown to Mr. O'Gorman himself, or any of his friends, or without concert with a single individual in Limerick. At the close of the poll the numbers were:—

O'CONNELL	...	...	...	581
O'BRIEN	...	...	...	532
O'GORMAN	...	...	...	38

The Rev. Mr. Kenyon and his friends were again hooted and groaned to-day.—*Limerick Reporter*.

### THE LIMERICK ELECTION.

To the Editor of the *Nation*.

My Dear Sir—As a slight token of my unbounded admiration of the noble, intrepid and virtuous conduct of the Rev. John Kenyon, C.C., Templeberry, with reference to the election for the City of Limerick, I beg to enclose you a Post Office order for a sovereign towards meeting the expenses for which the reverend gentleman has become responsible through defending the rights and privileges of Irish citizens from the attacks of a brutal, savage and bloodthirsty mob, hallooed on and instigated to deeds of violence by the “moral force” agents of the “Conciliation Hall” despots—with a hope that the “Confederates” will generally, on this occasion, prove themselves worthy of their title, and make manifest the faith that is within them, by at once coming forward and generously contributing, each in proportion to his means, to defend, in the person of the reverend gentleman, the great truths of which he is at once the luminous expounder and the fearless advocate.

I cannot omit the present opportunity of stating that never until recently, while sojourning in a foreign clime, did I consider I had cause to feel ashamed of the conduct of any portion of my countrymen towards another in a political

contest. I regret, however, to be obliged to admit that this is no longer the case, and to observe that since the disruption of the "Repeal" Association," but more particularly within the last few weeks, many things have occurred which have inclined me to think there may be some truth in the assertions—assertions which hitherto I have combated to the best of my ability—of my English acquaintances, who affirm that, in the event of a "Repeal of the Union," Ireland would, in all likelihood, resemble "revolutionary France" in all the horrors of faction and proscription. In truth, I fear that within the last twelve months the enemies of Irish Nationality have attained more of what they look upon as proofs—or, at least, can use as arguments—against the capacity of Irishmen for the duties of self-government than they could ever previously have hopes of possessing; and all this has happened through the conduct of men who profess to love Ireland. May God forgive, but I never can, the vain, ambitious, and envious young man who, by the abuse of the affections of a fond parent, and an example of highly intemperate conduct, had well nigh blasted whatever hope of freedom remains with Irishmen, and brought about scenes that may postpone our advent to nationhood for many years, while they make all real lovers of their country—exiles in the land of the Saxon and the stranger—hang their heads through shame.

Sincerely yours,

GEORGE DUGGAN, C.E.

Newnham, Gloucestershire,  
August 17, 1847.

Carrick-on-Suir,  
April 21st, 1848.

To the Editor, *Dublin Evening Post*.

Sir—Allow me, through your journal, which so richly deserves the gratitude of the "paternal Government," to say, in reply to Lord John Russell's menace of opposition till death to the Repeal of the Legislative Union, that whether he will or not, we must and shall have an inde-

pendent Legislature. And I beg leave, through you, to give him the reason.

The priests of Ireland are determined to stand by and with the people, come what may; and should the insane Whig policy drive them to the adoption of those means which the Milanese so successfully tried, like their sainted and glorious Archbishop, the Irish priest shall be found amid the fight, invoking Heaven's blessing on it. May God avert such a crisis! But should it come, may the wrongs of seven centuries nerve the arm of every Irishman. 'Tis better to have the truth plainly told to the English Government, that they may be wise in time. . . . Allow me, also, through you, to inform the Premier that on yesterday was held a meeting of the priests of this diocese (Waterford and Lismore), presided over by our reverend Bishop. An address praying her Majesty to grant Repeal was unanimously adopted. In the speech of his Lordship we were exhorted to go with the people in everything their good would demand, without a violation of the precepts of our holy religion—a counsel we'll cheerfully follow.

I have the honour to remain,

Your obedient servant,

P. BYRNE, R.C.C.

### THE PITCHFORK SUBSCRIPTION—AN IRISHMAN IN AMERICA.

The Rev. John Kenyon has received, with the accompanying letter, £2, the subscription of the writer towards the Pitchfork Fund. The letter will be read with great interest:—

To the Rev. John Kenyon.

Dear Sir—Two pounds of the above bill you will please to appropriate to the use of the wife and five helpless children of poor Guilfoyle, the Roscrea blacksmith, who is an inmate of Nenagh Gaol. The other two pounds you will be good enough to apply as a subscription for two copies of the *United Irishman*, to be forwarded to Philadelphia; one copy

to James Lucas, Kensington, Philadelphia, County Pennsylvania, and the other copy to Myler D. Sweeny, Second Street, Pennsylvania.

Having thus discharged this little matter of business, permit me to say that the writer of those lines is the same John Binns whose trial in 1797 was quoted by Mr. Butt on the late trial of William S. O'Brien, Esq., and his heart still beats as warmly as ever in the cause of freedom and of dear native Erin! Believe me, my dear sir, there are millions of men and women in this glorious free nation whose hearts beat high and wish most ardently for the emancipation of Old Ireland.

In haste, I am,

Faithfully and gratefully yours,

JOHN BINNS,

A native of Dublin.

THE NATION, June 3rd, 1848.

To the Editor of the *Freeman*.

23 Merchants' Quay.

Sir—Whether the following statement may tend in any degree to support charges made in open court by John Mitchel, “*der unzige*,” against Henry Sneyd French, High Sheriff of this City, the public will determine. That it proves a case of the cruellest tyranny against the High Sheriff, or the Castle government, or both, I entertain not the shadow of doubt.

Mr. Mitchel having apprised me of his earnest anxiety that I should procure an interview with him before he left the country in the event of his being sentenced to transportation I applied for that purpose to the Governor of Newgate, and was by him referred to the High Sheriff as alone authorised to permit such interview. To the High Sheriff accordingly I addressed the following note:—

“Rev. Mr. Kenyon desires to intimate to the High Sheriff of Dublin City that Mr. Mitchel is anxious that he (Mr.

Kenyon) should be admitted to a short interview, and requests an order to that effect.

“Saturday, 20 minutes past 12 o’clock.”

To this application Mr. French returned a verbal answer, importing that, as he (Mr. French) had not authority to make the order wanted, he had laid my note before the sitting Judges, Lefroy and Moore, and that they had decided that the interview which Mr. Mitchel desired could not be procured except by an order of the Government, which order, the Sheriff added, he doubted not but I should obtain upon application at the Castle.

A most respectable clergyman was present in my company while Mr. French was thus speaking, and, of course, can verify, if it be questioned, this relation of his words.

Accompanied by the clergyman alluded to, I then proceeded to the Castle, and addressed the following letter to Mr. Redington, enclosing the note which I had previously sent to Mr. French, and which he had returned to me:—

“Sir—The enclosed note was returned to me by the High Sheriff of this City, who stated, when returning it, that it was not competent to him to grant the indulgence sought, and, furthermore, that he had laid it before the Judges now sitting at Green Street, and that they were also unable to grant it. The High Sheriff concluded by saying that the application must be addressed to the Government, and that if so addressed he did not doubt of its success.

“I have to request, then, sir, as a clergyman, that this reasonable request be complied with, and await your answer with considerable anxiety.

“Your very humble servant,

“John Kenyon.”

This application was strengthened by the clergyman who accompanied me in the following words appended at the foot of the page:—

“The Rev. — — —, D.D., of — — —, unites in the above request, and begs most respectfully that a like indulgence may be extended to himself.”

To this petition Mr. Redington replied as follows:—

“Dublin Castle,

“27th May, 1848.

“Sir—In reply to your application, I beg to state that as Mr. Mitchel is still in Newgate he is in the custody of the High Sheriff of the City of Dublin; it is not in my power, therefore, to make any order for your admission to an interview with the prisoner, nor is it the practice of this office to do so while the convict remains in the custody of the County or City High Sheriff, as the case may be.

“I have the honour to be, sir,

“Your obedient servant,

“T. N. Redington.

“Rev. J. Kenyon.

“P.S.—You are, of course, at liberty to make this communication known to the High Sheriff.”

On receipt of this answer, I retraced my steps to Green Street, full of indignation at the “jugglery” to which I had been plainly subjected, but as yet not absolutely certain on what side the shame and guilt should be charged; for the Queen’s Under-Secretary and the Queen’s High Sheriff had expressed themselves, the one in spoken words, open and advised, the other in writing, with such apparent sincerity that I hesitated to affix a stigma upon either.

Having at Mr. Redington’s suggestion placed his letter in Mr. French’s hands, that gentleman, after a certain amount of shuffling, solved the mystery at length by the following communication:—

“Sir—In reply to your application, I beg to say that the permission to see Mr. Mitchel is at present confined to his immediate family. Should it be further extended I shall be very happy to attend to your wish.

“I have the honour to be, sir,

“Your most obedient servant,

“Rev. Mr. Kenyon.”

“Henry S. French.

I am, sir,

Your very humble servant,

JOHN KENYON, V.P.,

May 29th.

Templenderry.



JOHN MARTIN'S LETTER TO MITCHEL ON THE  
DEATH OF FATHER KENYON.

Dublin, 27th March, 1869.

My Dear Mitchel—The newspapers will have given you the news that our friend Father Kenyon is dead. He died last Sunday night at seven o'clock of a fit of vomiting blood. He had been confined to bed six or seven weeks. Peter Gill was with him at the last. . . . In his letter telling me of the sad event he says that just before the attack Father Kenyon had been talking much and beautifully. "He died like a lamb," Mr. Gill says. I trust, therefore, he had no long agony. For just about six weeks he had ceased to write to Hentie or me, or even to send us newspapers. But I supposed that it was merely one of his freaks that made him silent. Many a time within those few years past he would write me eight or ten letters in a week, and again would leave my letters unanswered and keep silent for weeks. And as to Hentie, while he exacted as many letters as he could from her, he hardly ever wrote directly to her at all. She is distressed now at thinking of him lying sick and alone all those six weeks, and I, too, am sorry that I did not go to Templederry to see him, and find out what was the matter. It was wonderful how loving he was to us and to William. It is a huge piece of our lives cut off, this removal of Father Kenyon. When I say *our* I mean you and Mrs. Mitchel and Minnie quite as much as Hentie, William and myself. . . . Nobody perhaps was ever more gifted for friendship. And think of the sad contradictions, or freaks of his nature, which in his latter years made that so loved and craved for human society, chase away from him most of his friends, and lead a sort of hermit life at Templederry! I think Father Kenyon had the *finest* intellect of all the men I have known in life. Nobody had a more genial nature, nobody a richer humour, nobody brighter spirits and keener senses of enjoyment. Beautifully witty he was, and wonderfully wise. What a memory he had! What accomplishments of literary education! And then what an imagination, boundless as creation!

And the nobleness of his character and of all his judgments of human affairs! And the playfulness of his nature! But I could not, with hard trying, note down half the qualities that made him so charming and so dear to us. You and Mrs. Mitchel and Minnie will be very sorry, though there was so little chance of your ever seeing him again. Our friends are one by one passing away, and so shall we when our time comes.

### TO THE MEMORY OF JOHN KENYON.

(From the *Irishman*, April 10, 1869.)

Many men have been ecclesiastics of one religion or another in their time, and are now remembered less for their connection with churches than for their influence on their fellows by force of character in politics or literature, or by the wit and singularity of their intellectual powers. Of such are the writer of the "Drapiers' Letters," the *cure* of Mendon, Peter Plymley, the Rev. Rowland Hill, the late Dr. Cahill (in a smaller way), and a host of others. And so will the name of John Kenyon go down to posterity—not as a P.P. of a certain living for a score of years, but as patriot, scholar, and *bel esprit*. He was a good priest in his day, but so was Laurence Sterne; he preached noble discourses, but nobody will think of them when his figure will be called up, as nobody's thoughts have ever strayed on the "sermons" when the talk is on the author of "The Sentimental Journey."

The Pastor of Temple-derry was an extraordinary and superb creature—one of such a frame and such parts that it would be an injustice to the country that owned him to let him pass away without the endeavour to bring it to a sense of its loss. It was the privilege of the writer of this paper to have known Father Kenyon, to have been admitted into the circle of his friendship; for this reason alone he would esteem it his duty to twine a chaplet of sad flowers over the new-made grave in the Tipperary mountains; but there is another and a special reason why he should say something of him who is departed. Travelling in company

with the deceased, some six years ago, from Templemore to Dublin, John Kenyon suddenly turned round in the railway carriage and said: "Mark me well, for I charge you to say what you think of me when I die."

The time to fulfil that sacred charge unfortunately has come, and I sit down to my desk to honestly and boldly, as the dead worthy himself would wish it, to pen my thoughts in his regard and set on record some traits that recall the man and fix his rare character more rightly with the public.

It grieved me much in a foreign land to learn that he was no more, that his bright light had gone out—grieved me less for his sake, for the dissolution of the flesh to him was moral and physical relief, than for the sake of *his* and *my* land and *yours*, Irish reader.

And it pained me, knowing the man (for I had studied him), to see him dismissed by many with the common-place eulogia that are lavished over common—councilmen and people of that class and calibre—"damned with faint praise" in some newspapers by individuals who never did appreciate him because they never could rise to his height.

Among the obituaries to his memory one phrase has struck me as felicitous—phrase which reproduces the man—"He was courageous enough to be singular." Yes, that is most true; he had the courage to trample underfoot despotism of mob or mediocrity, as he defied and spat in the face of despotism of laws and kings. While bold enough to sing the "Marseillaise" with Barbaroux, he was keen-sighted enough to penetrate the truth of Seneca's maxim—*male imparatur cum regit vulgus duces*. He knew that if the populace is so often right that it would be claimed that it is always right; they who represent themselves as the people are not seldom *not* the people. Standing on the ledge of a hustings before a howling election rabble of Limerick, he has laughed its goose hissings to scorn. Firm as the poet's ideal who was "just and tenacious of purpose," he held his own until his enemies were forced into admiration. He would proclaim the faith that was in him, though it brought him contumely; he would speak in spite of

“Dean or Devil”—in the phrase so happy, he was courageous enough to be singular.

Genteel nobodies in jaunting-cars who passed, wondered to hear that this unkempt figure in long slovenly coat, delving, spade in hand, into the soil, or picking up the weeds from the garden-patch, was the priest of the parish. There he was, working silently, his large greyhound Lufra (called after the favourite of Sir Walter’s pack) capering by his side, but where were his thoughts? Who *can divine*? For Father Kenyon was a poet.

There be poets (and, perhaps, the best)  
That never sung, but crushed the God within.

Poetry is not rhymed endings; it is the double sight of nature, the seeing in it of more than is visible to mortal ken—a sort of supernatural power of vision. And that had this amateur husbandman. A lover of the beautiful in God’s work and man’s work; of the stormy ocean, the tall cliffs where the seamews build, of the black gorges, the rustling green groves, and the silvery streamlets in the meadow-tracts; of a good book, a beautiful picture, music, and Etruscan vases: such he was, and to this appreciation of the symmetries he added the nicest critical taste and the largest sense of enjoyment. Therefore, think I, was he true poet.

Strong and passionate of temperament, he was hot in his hate and profound in his sorrows, as he was large in his love and generous in his sympathies. None could throw more emotion into the recital of Mangan’s translation of the “Song of Hatred.” He detested “badness and baseness,” and cared not to conceal his detestation.

Talking over the “insurrection” of ’48, and the queer chivalric consideration of Smith O’Brien for the enemy’s property, he would shrug his shoulders and say, “The side of a ditch should have been tumbled over the chieftain.” John Mitchel was his ideal of the leaders of that epoch; an oil-painting of the patriot, purchased for a trifle on Dublin Quays, was once brought as a present to him by a friend. “Judging from the prices paid for the likenesses of alder-

men and such," he was wont to say, looking up at it fondly in his parlour, "I value that canvas at least at a hundred pounds, but I would not sell it for a thousand!" When two members of a family he loved were drowned in an omnibus in that extraordinary accident at Portobello Bridge, he shut himself up in his room and refused to be comforted.

"Ah, this is the first skelp at my vitals," he cried, when mute grief had calmed down to the grief of ejaculation.

His political stand was unique. At times in his own diocese he was the exception to his order; but never the recreant to the principle he had set down for himself—to act on his own thinking. And his thinking, as a rule, was clearly and intelligently for the general good. He believed in something higher for Ireland than the three points of the National Association; and in the sustainment of his belief he was stern, unbribable, craving no grace, stooping to no favour. So sign did he die, misunderstood by the herd.

John Kenyon, this strong-willed, strong-limbed, though sensitive and lithely-built man, with clear, grey eye, firm mouth, chin of decision, and the muscles swelling like cordage on his full, square brow; this man, cast as in iron, had a marvellous force of character—impressed himself on the spectator—made his peculiar Carlylian sentences sink into the mind of the listener.

He had his terrible effectiveness, his mood of satire that scathed—but he had his intervals of drollery. Around his parlour fire he would assemble his guests, quench the lights, lower the curtains, tell the timersome to leave, and then by the fitful glow of the embers narrate—the nursery story of Captain Murderer, from "The Uncommercial Traveller." The refining society of females was always dear to him; he was seldom without two or three beautiful and accomplished women under his roof, and he would listen in rapt pleasure as some fair finger ran over the piano, or, better still, he would take down some grand play, such as the "Midsummer Night's Dream," and have it read aloud by the different members of the little society, he himself always insisting that he should render the part of *Bottom*. He was a great reader of books, yet not a bookworm; his nature

was too quick and energetic for that, the air round his mountain home was too fresh and inspiring. He had a house built on an eminence in his garden, and fitted up as a library, with no furniture but dry tomes, a stove, a wash-hand stand, and a camp-bed in the corner. There he would retire, and sometimes seclude himself for days. In the choice of his reading he showed exquisite and scholarly discrimination; he could read belles lettres while appreciating philosophy. He was a fervid admirer of the poetry of Keats, he could relish the subtle spirit of Landor's "Imaginary Conversations," laugh with tickled humour over the "Ingoldsby Legends," find much that was acutely sensible and nobly straightforward in the "Memoirs of Sir Charles Napier," pronounce Mitchel's "Jail Journal" a book of power, and lay down that splendid treatise of Balmez, the Spanish Jesuit, with approving slap of the hand on its roan cover. Shakespeare he knew better, perhaps, than most divines would care to get credit for, and could quote him in a sermon; he rioted in the conceits of that good knight, Don Quixote, and was fond of reading them over in the original; and withal he has been heard to admit that he had wept over Mrs. Inchbald's "Simple Story"—the only fiction, he used to add, that had ever moved him to tears.

His associates, like his books, were few but choice. Nobody was admitted to his intimacy who had not a quality more than ordinary, be it a quality of eccentricity to make his presence tolerable. Affectation amused him, gluttony repelled him, servility enraged him, the spirit of contradiction he could not tolerate—in others. His was an extraordinary personality—one whose attributes were so bright that his faults sink into eclipse. But I fear he had much mental obliquity and a leaning to what will be considered failings when gauged by the prudent worldly standard. The Protestant Vicar of the Parish was absolutely his friend! Talk to him of Garibaldi; he did not recollect the heathen who called the priests of Italy straccione, he only knew the hero who flung himself on the Marsala with The Thousand! "Denominational education" he looked on as a fine twelve-syllabled platform-cry, and actually believed that

when Catholic and Protestant have to live together in the one nation, the better if they were educated together! Worse of all, I tremble to write it, he was positively of opinion that hell was not hot enough and eternity long enough for all practical purposes; and was so weak as to fancy that Pagans had a chance of going to Heaven, and that for ever!

When bishops are consecrated, hospitality is enjoined upon them as a virtue to be practised. Turn not away the stranger from your door, but take him in and welcome him; for you may entertain an angel. Kenyon was not a bishop—if it rained mitres, not one would fit his head—yet was he most archiepiscopically, Arabically hospitable. From a plank in Nenagh he vowed that William Keogh deserved to be hanged as high as Haman, he, the puisne Judge, who demanded with clenched fist and purple cheeks that the peasant brothers, Cormack, should be found guilty of murder (a murder they declared they knew not on the scaffold); yet if a poor tutor, such as the same William Keogh once had been, were to knock at the door of the chapel-house of Templederry, be thirsty and look an honest man, he was welcome to the best vintage of Johannesburg.

Poor, great John Kenyon, how pitiful that thou shouldst have passed away, giving the God-like powers that were meant for mankind to a narrow circle—sinking into the burial-pit and leaving behind thee no more enduring memorial of thyself than might a singer of the opera, the recollection of an inspired voice, recollection which must die with this generation. Thy gifts were developed, but never utilised as they should have been for thy brethren, and therein thou hast much to answer for. Thy mind, rich in amplest beauty and store of vegetation, like the primaeval forest, bloomed loneliness, and its fruits fell in utter prodigality of waste on the barren soil.

It was three winters ago, the last time I saw thee, in the house 26 of the Rue de Lacepede, in Paris, since tumbled down by the municipality, and its place sown with salt. "Salve, John Augustus, you here!" The figure was bent, the face furrowed, there was a thread of weakness in the

timbre of the once firm voice. He spoke of St. Cloud, which he had been to visit; of the Hotel of the Cluny Museum, the finest piece of mediaeval grace extant; of Colonel Myles Byrne, "a perfect old man—the noblest it had ever been his happiness to meet." John Mitchel was in the house at the time (indeed, it was solely to visit him Kenyon had come to the French capital), and so was John Martin. The three, the son of the Unitarian clergyman of the North; the gentle, tolerant, but withal staunch Presbyterian, and the Munster priest, had been, at the request of the latter, to have their likenesses taken in a group. Kenyon held much to this harmless little whim, and was pleased as a schoolboy over the picture.

After his two visitors had left for home I met John Mitchel. He was pensive that night, and wore the air of one "whose spirits" were depressed. "Well," he said, "I feel melancholy; poor Father Kenyon! He's going rapidly. I bade him good-bye to-day—something tells me he and I shall never meet again on this side of the grave!" The presentment has been realised.

Poor Father Kenyon! Henry Grattan said of the Rev. Anthony O'Leary: "If I had not known him to be a Christian priest I should have taken him to be a philosopher of the Augustan era." The same might be said of thee, but there is no Grattan to say it.

Dead, and all dead, alas! but the example of thy life! Dead, leaving many friends, and—I pride to add it, for it betokens thy valiant honesty—many enemies. Light lie the earth upon thy coffin!

JOHN AUGUSTUS O'SHEA.

Paris.









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